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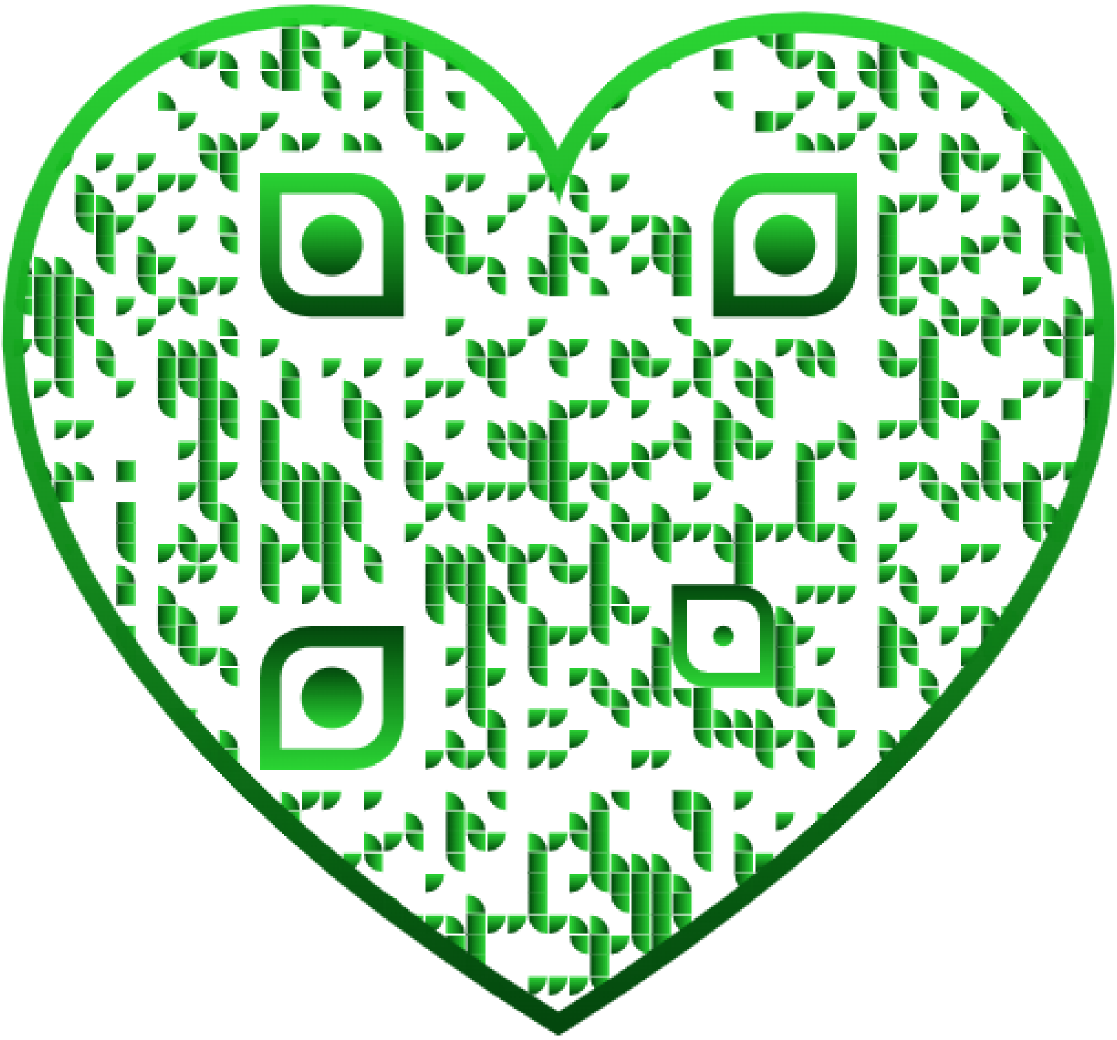

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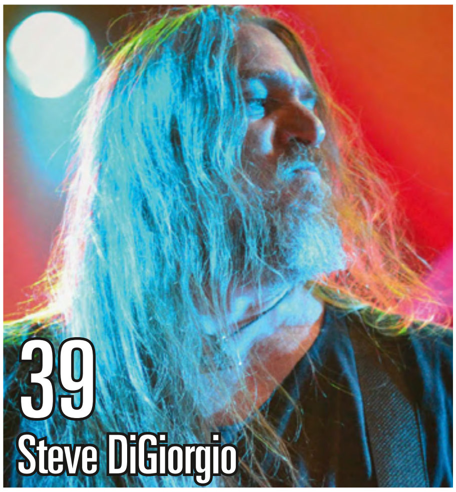
Sometimes you walk away from a long-awaited event feeling on top of the world: as if everything you wanted to go right, went right, and that you could do it all again if you had the chance. Well, friends, that's how we at *BGM* felt on 3 March, the day after the long-awaited London Bass Guitar Show 2014, which we at the magazine and our colleagues at Blaze Publishing have been working on for the last year.

I can't express how delighted we all are with this year's LBGS better than the several readers who buttonholed me at Olympia and told me that for them, and for the British bass community in general, it's the high point of their calendar. Look out for our in-depth report in this issue, which revisits the amazing gear manufacturers who exhibited at the show, and also says hello to the many world-class bass players who performed for us. It really was the experience of a lifetime, and one that we're going to do our damnedest to beat in 2015. See you there!

Elsewhere in this issue we escape the dank British spring with a visit to California, where our cover star Fieldy of Korn entertains us. We also meet a huge range of bass talent, from Let Spin to Snarky Puppy to Testament and beyond, while shaking hands with iconic bassists from the soul and jazz world. If that's not enough for you, dive into our reviews and tuition sections, where – as always – we cover gear and advice to suit all budgets and abilities. Stay in touch and let the good times roll...

Joel McIver, editor



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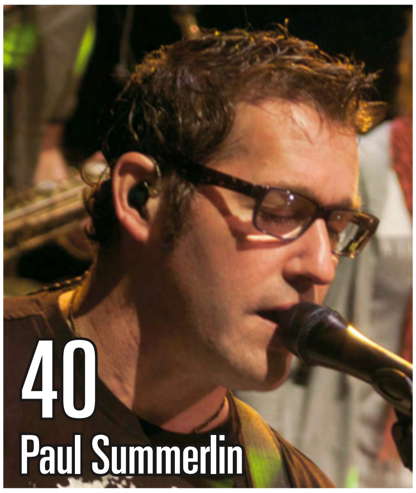

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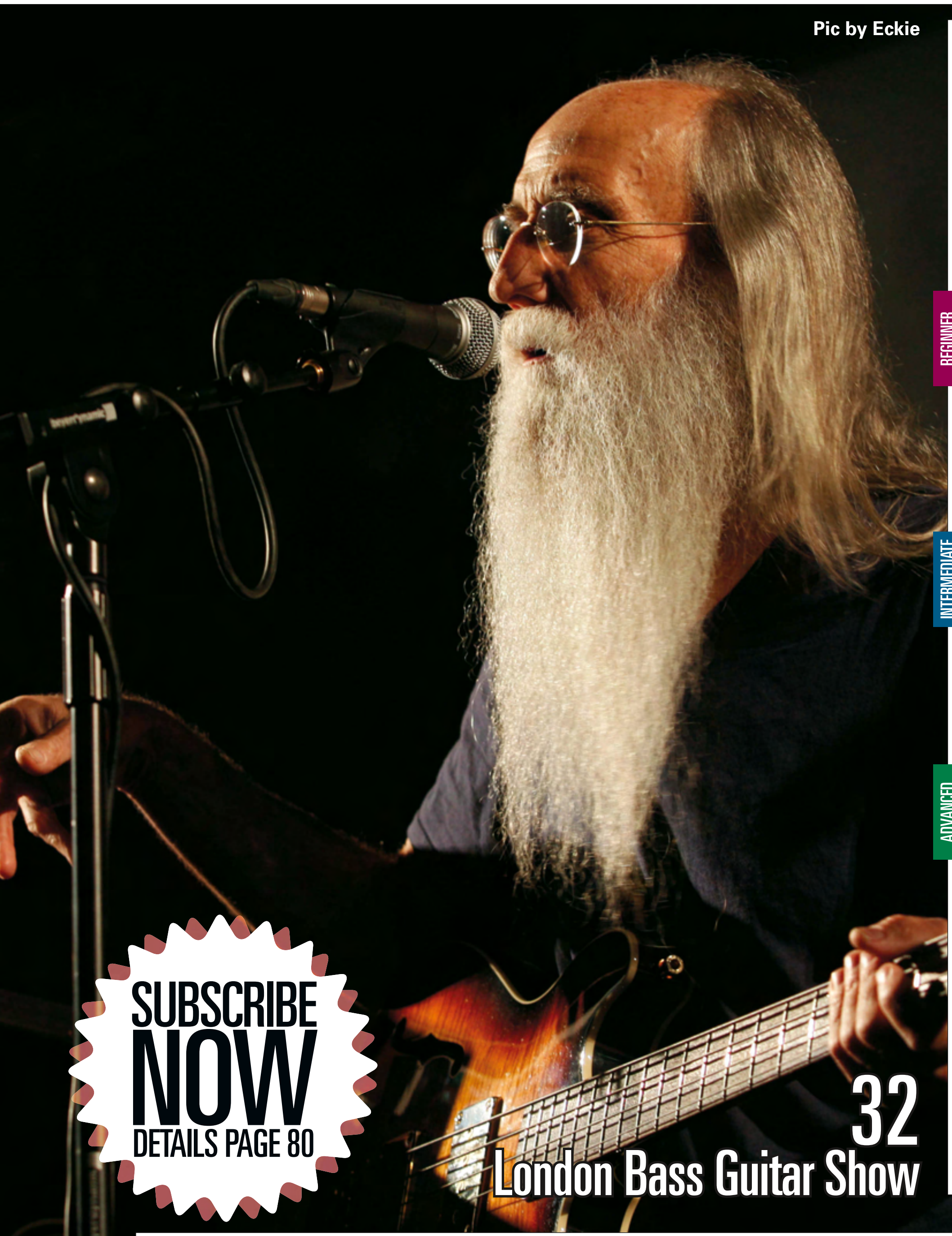
Pic by Eckie



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THE LOW DOWN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM AROUND THE BASS WORLD, BROUGHT TO YOU BY BGM'S INTREPID REPORTING TEAM

STICK MAN

Meet Gary Jibilian of the band Setar and his own eponymous band, who has new material for a CD, DVD and video shoot for the mighty Stick Enterprises on the way. As he tells us, "I plan to show off the NS/Stick's capabilities in the metal genre. I started out playing a four-string bass, and have been a five-string bassist for the past 20 or so years, but since 2000, I've been playing the eight-string NS/Stick, a hybrid guitar/bass tapping instrument, which allows me to utilise tap/slap/fingerstyle techniques in one instrument with greater efficiency than a conventional bass." For anyone worried about this frankly terrifying instrument, Jibilian adds: "Don't be afraid to ask questions about certain parts. The next step is to play live shows with the Stick, where you will learn to adapt to crappy stage sound, muscle cramps, brain-farts, and drunks in the crowd!" You heard it here first. Look out for an interview with Stick inventor Emmett Chapman in a forthcoming issue of *BGM.*

Info: www.garyjibilian.com

TO THE VICTOR THE SPOILS

Danish amp titans TC Electronic have recruited none other than Victor Wooten for their latest TonePrint sound, described by the folks at TC as "a very subtle and very versatile chorus. It's great for shining up sustained parts, for adding an edge to your slapping – and pretty much everything in between." To celebrate the release of the Wooten TonePrint as well as another by fellow instrumental genius Mike Stern, TC Electronic will be giving away signed Flashback Delay and Corona Chorus pedals.

Info: www.tcelectronic.com/stern-wooten-toneprints

MCBRIDE, HOLLAND RETURN

The annual Love Supreme Jazz Festival is packed to the rafters with bass talent this year, with jazz giants Dave Holland and Christian McBride appearing on a bill that is sure to feature more low grooves than your old R&B vinyl collection. Scheduled for 4 to 6 July at Glynde Place in East Sussex, the LSJF has been described by the Guardian as "the British jazz world's Glastonbury" and by the Independent as "a Woodstock moment for British jazz", although hopefully without either of those august events' mud levels. Alongside McBride and Holland you can also witness earth-shaking low notes from hip-hoppers Soul II Soul, ace instrumentalists Snarky Puppy (see our interview with lead Puppy and bassist Michael League later in this issue) and the famous Blue Note bassist Derrick Hodge.

Info: www.lovesupremefestival.com

NONE MORE BLACK

Look out for British rockers and perennial *BGM* faves Johnny Wore Black, whose debut album *Walking Underwater Part I* is out as you read this. Produced by Grammy-winning fader-tweaker David Bottrill and featuring the guest bass talents of Megadeth's David Ellefson as well as those of regular bassist Pete Mathers, WU1 includes the two singles 'All The Rage' and 'Up In Flames'.

Info: www.johnnyworeblack.com

Triumvirate

We select three essential albums from a genre or player.
THIS MONTH: Robert Trujillo

1 THE ART OF REBELLION, Suicidal Tendencies

Although this 1992 effort by the crossover thrash legends left some fans perplexed at the time, it's now acknowledged as one of their finest efforts. Trujillo's bass playing is wiry and aggressive throughout and is perfectly suited to the album's flirtations with funky grooves. His fluid bass soloing at the beginning of 'I Wasn't Meant To Feel This/Asleep At The Wheel' leads into a melodic line that finds its own space under the wall of distorted guitars, while the pulsing groove on 'I'll Hate You Better' shows his more restrained side.

2 MAS BORRACHO, Infectious Grooves

This was the last album to date by this funk-metal supergroup, displaying their usual goofy humour and effortless grooves. With more than a touch of Primus about them, Infectious Grooves weren't for everyone, but Trujillo's bass playing is: throughout the album, he bounces off the tribal drumming of Stephen Perkins. Check out the high-energy slap line on 'Welcome To The Nation', the bubbling punk-funk of 'Just A Lil Bit' and of course, the unsurprisingly groove-heavy 'Please Excuse This Funk Up'.

3 DEGRADATION TRIP, Jerry Cantrell

Although most rock bass-lines aren't as technically challenging as funk and jazz, it takes a particular kind of player to do it well. Just ask any jazz-fusion player who delivers a thumping rock groove with all the conviction and power of a dead haddock – but not our Rob. On this album he delivers crushing rock bass, with a fat growling tone that cuts through the wall of guitars. On softer numbers such as 'Solitude', Trujillo shows great restraint, locking in with the kicks and adding the odd melodic flourish.

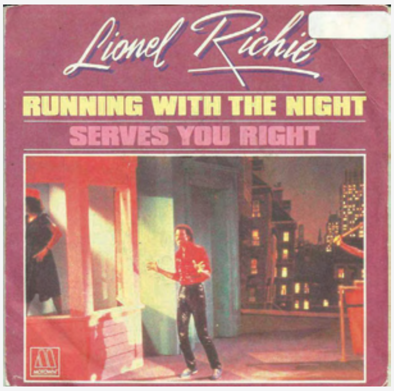
Revolver

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH:
'Running With The Night'

Bassist: *Joe Chemay*
Album: *Can't Slow Down, Lionel Richie*

By the time this 1983 album erupted onto the charts, Lionel Richie had transitioned from funkmaster to smooth balladeer, but on this track he showed some of that old edge. Alongside Steve Lukather's searing guitar work – allegedly laid down in one take when he was warming up – the driving, clipped bass work of session ace Joe Chemay has us nodding our heads. It's a wonderful illustration of how a simple note choice and a nuanced approach to note length can make a standard bass-line into something greater than its parts. Notice how Chemay pushes into the beat sometimes, lengthening a note and then pulling back before adding in a subtle walking line up to the tonic. Pure class.

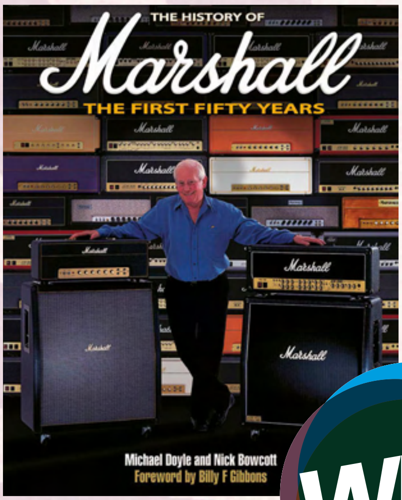


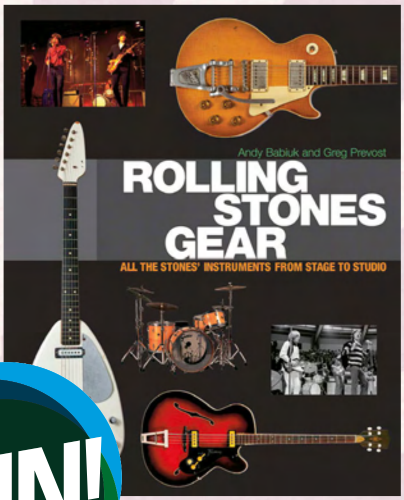
RETURN OF THE HOF

London-based South African bassist and bandleader Gregori Hofmann returns with his second album as a bandleader. *Tidy Lasagne Saga: Against Gala Days* sees him break away from the stripped-back sound of his debut and strive for something different, his press release informs us, with danceable grooves and soaring melodies accompanying slick arrangements. Hofmann's influences range from Weather Report and Chick Corea to Thundercat and Richard Bona, all of which sounds like a reason to investigate to us.
Info: www.gregorihofmann.com

ORTEGA ERROR

Due to an international miscommunication, we incorrectly displayed the price of those nice Ortega Lizzy ukelele basses in *BGM* 102 as £465. The correct price should be £389, saving you enough spare change for a curry for your band.

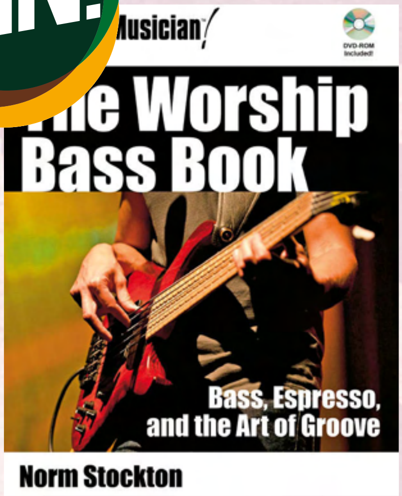




WIN!

Take away three splendid bass books: *The History Of Marshall* by Michael Doyle and Nick Bowcott; *The Worship Bass Book: Bass, Espresso And The Art Of Groove* by Norm Stockton; and *Rolling Stones Gear* by Andy Babiuk, all published by Hal Leonard and Backbeat.

Each is an epic tome devoted to its subject in immense detail and sure to reward you with several lifetimes' worth of bass-heavy entertainment. Grab these must-have volumes by answering this child's-play question:



Which two musicians both have 'Marshall' somewhere in their names?

A David Coverdale and Victoria Beckham
B Jimi Hendrix and Eminem
C Cheryl Baker out of Bucks Fizz and the bloke with the mullet out of Nickelback

Go to www.bassguitarmagazine.com/competition to enter. Closing date: 21 May.

Luke Capon wins a Gibson EB bass from issue 100, while a Soundblox Micromodeler goes to Mike Exarchos. Thanks to all who entered. **WON!**

G&L TO MBL

The Manchester Bass Lounge (MBL) has become a key dealer for G&L basses, offering the Fullerton, California models and the more affordable Tribute range. "This represents another important step forward for us," says Drew Dempster of MBL. "As more and more retailers undergo a process of brand consolidation, it leaves opportunities for specialists such as ourselves to step in and take on premium brands such as G&L. It's right that that these fine instruments are readily available to players up here in the North!"
Info: www.manchesterbasslounge.com

A FAIR COP

LaBella have come out with a new range of strings, the Copper White Nylon Tapewound series. With transparent nylon wrapped over copper underlays, the new strings are said to provide a warmer and suppler tone, enabling the player (say LaBella) "to effortlessly glide from note to note". We'll take 'em!
Info: www.labella.com

EVERY MONTH MASTER AXE RESTORER SIMON MCVEIGH WORKS ON BRINGING A KNACKERED OLD STATUS BACK TO LIFE. MONTH TWO: AN OIL RUB AND FRETTING OVER THE FRETS

Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

I'm really feeling inspired by my recent visit to the London Bass Guitar Show: just absorbing that intoxicating atmosphere and hearing so many great players giving great advice is enough to keep me going for another year.

Back to the Status Groove project. As we saw last month, the original bridge is missing a lot of parts, so I've decided to redesign a new one based on the same footprint size. As a result, there will be no need to drill any new unsightly holes in my bass. I'm having it handcrafted by metalworker extraordinaire Matty Dread, who should have it ready next month. The bridge will be made from lightweight brushed aluminium, which will feature a front-loading string release system for a quicker string change.

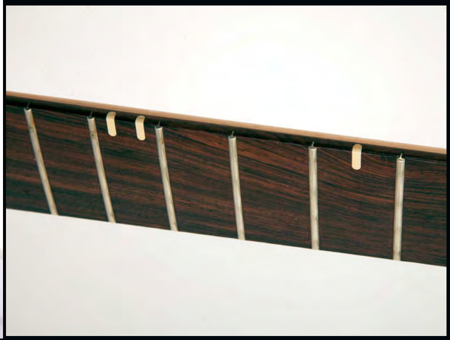
When I was designing the bridge I also did some designs for a new scratchguard and control knobs. Why don't I just buy off-the-shelf hardware for the bass, you ask? Well I could – but where's the fun in that?

This bass also came in a fretless model and indeed, I had planned to defret it. However, after listening to Lee Sklar in his masterclass at the LBGS, talking about how he uses mandolin frets to give him a near-fretless sound without the intonation headaches that go with the fretless territory, I'm really tempted to try it myself.

I have the body stripped back to the wood, a lovely piece of alder that I want to keep as natural as possible. I am making my own beeswax and mineral oil mix to protect the wood. To do this, I'm melting some beeswax and adding oil to make an emulsion paste with the consistency of Vaseline when it cools.

To apply this I rub it in to the wood in the direction of the grain with a clean dry cloth, leave it to absorb and dry, and then simply buff it. This will seal and protect the wood as well as giving it a healthily satin sheen: this treatment should be repeated about once a year to keep the wood in good shape.

There are a couple of really nice features on this bass that are worth mentioning, including a zero fret. I always like to see one of these on a bass as they make tuning more accurate. I also like the wraparound fret markers. I can't help thinking that these markers would be even better if they were replaced with LEDs, but that is out of my budget. Perhaps Status had these in mind, but as the production run was so short on this particular model, we will never know...



Costs so far: £200 for the bass
£50 for the bridge and £5 for the beeswax and oil
Total: £255
Info: simonmcveigh@eircom.net

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THE BASS SCHOLARSHIP

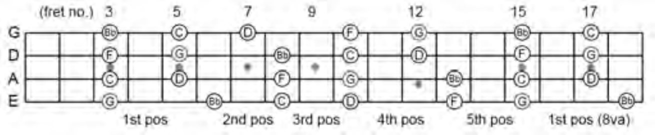
Institute scholarship winner Rares Diaconu goes introduces inversions

With the second term almost coming to an end, I'm prepping hard for the summative assessments in week 10. I'm excited about this week's classes, though, as in a couple of them we'll be exploring some songs from Paul Simon's *Graceland*. If you don't know the album, go check it out! It has some groovy bass lines played by the South African bassist and composer Bakithi Kumalo.

Last month we looked at the first shapes of the minor and major pentatonic scales. However, there are actually five positions or inversions in which we can play these scales. Getting familiar with all five of them will help your fretboard knowledge, allowing you to expand your bass-lines all over it. This month we're going to look at the minor pentatonic positions, but you can apply the same way of thinking to the major pentatonic.

The idea is very simple: each position starts off a different note of the minor pentatonic. So, if the first position consists of the root, 2nd, minor 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, minor 7th, the second position (starting from the 2nd degree of the scale) will be 2nd, minor 3rd, perfect 4th, perfect 5th, minor 7th, root. The same idea applies to the other three positions.

Taking the G minor pentatonic as an example, the notes in the first two positions will be G, Bb, C, D, F (1st position) and Bb, C, D, F, G (2nd position). The fretboard diagram below will help you visualise all the five positions of the minor pentatonic scale.



I hope you will have fun expanding the pentatonic scale over the whole fretboard. Remember, you don't have to learn all five positions at once. Get comfortable with each of them before going to the next one. Until next time, stay on the low frequency!

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AMPS SUNN 300T, AMPEG 8X10 AND 2X15 CABS

HENRY UPTON, LIONIZE

My bass style is a mish-mash of a lot of different influences: very rooted in funk music but sonically more tube-driven and grimy. I'd like to think I do my own thing. I'm still figuring out the four-string. I used to play a five, and I dug the extra tones underneath. Eventually I came to prefer the feel of the four-string: sometimes limitations breed creativity. Slapping was how I first learned to play, but I only slap occasionally. I don't think it fits with a lot of what Lionize does, but I'll throw it in here and there. My first bass was a red Mexican Squier P-Bass I got on a family vacation. I wanted it to be fretless after a while, so I tried sanding down the frets. I got halfway through one and realised I had just destroyed my bass. My favourite bass ever is the Gibson EB-0 I'm playing at the moment. The serial number has worn off so I'm not sure what year it is. Best tone I've found so far. My bass heroes are Verdine White, James Jamerson, George Porter Jr., John Paul Jones, Geezer Butler, Charles Mingus, Mark Sandman, Paul Jackson, Flea, Ron Carter, Jack Bruce and Bootsy Collins, to name a few. We hit the UK with Clutch in April and May.

www.lionizemusic.com

GEAR
BASSES WARWICK SC, STREAMER
EFFECTS ROLAND GT10B PEDALBOARD
AMPS GALLIEN-KRUEGER MB 800W HEAD, NEO 4X10 CABINET

KEVIN 'BRANDINO' BRANDON

The high points of my career as a bassist so far are working with Grammy-winning artists like Justin Timberlake, Will.I.Am, Kanye West and Rihanna to name a few, as well as working for my good friend conductor Benjamin Wright. My favourite basses ever to date are my Warwick SC five- and six-strings and Streamer seven-string. There are so many great bass players, but the ones who have influenced me the most are Slam Stewart, Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, James Jamerson, Chuck Rainey and Wilton Felder. Since an early age I've always looked for my own sound, and through the years as music has changed I've always changed my basses and rig to accommodate the music I'm recording or performing, from a Fender 59 Precision to the latest Warwick SC instruments. Having an acoustic bass background helps your ear to hear the sound of the wood more than the actual electronics. If you look for your voice on the bass you will find it: if you emulate other players you'll sound like other players – but everybody likes an original! I'm releasing three albums this year, another book, a DVD, and producing some new artists. My group Brandino And Friends performs once a month at the Seven Grand club in downtown LA where my latest release was recorded. See iTunes for my new releases.

www.facebook.com/brandino.bass

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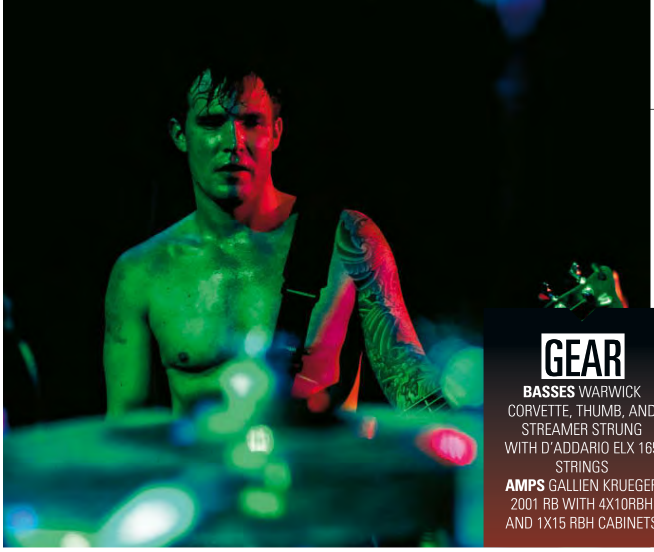

GEAR
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AMPS GALLIEN KRUEGER 2001 RB WITH 4X10RBH AND 1X15 RBH CABINETS

CHRIS CLEMENCE, RAPSCALLIONS

I'm a rock bassist who listened to way too much George Clinton growing up. I love the grit of punk and hard rock, as well as the bounce and danceability of funk. I've always tried to marry the two styles in our songs. I mainly play a four-string bass. I feel that it's all you need. So much can be expressed and said with four strings that I don't find it necessary for any add-ons. That being said, there are many great five- and six-string bassists out there, but there's just something I love about the classic, stripped down four. When I slap, I try to do it in as much of a musical way as I can that fits the context of the song. When I was first starting out, it was all 'who can slap faster?', almost like going to the gym and seeing some steroid guys comparing muscles. I think it's a maturity thing. Now, if I do slap, I make sure that it complements the vocals of the song, and sits in the pocket, rather than being a flashy 'look at me' kind of thing. Those licks belong in Guitar Center. The secret of playing bass well is to sing your parts and never lose the groove. If you start singing along with your lines you'll start creating more melodic parts that might not just fly out from wagging your fingers around the neck in the mundane box patterns. The bass can be just as melodic as a guitar or horn, but also has the power to control the beat, so in a band situation it's a big responsibility. My favourite bass is my current main bass, a Warwick Corvette. I have several Warwicks, including Thumbs and Streamers, which are also amazing instruments that I love, but for some reason this one bass just has the magic. I've used it on our first two records and will definitely be using it for our upcoming one as well. I have so many bass influences but I would have to say my all-time favourites are Jaco, Bernard Edwards, Bootsy Collins, Larry Graham, Rocco Prestia and Flea. All of these artists have taught me a great deal of what I know and have heavily influenced my playing style.

www.facebook.com/rapscallionsmusic

SIMON WRIGHT, 65DAYSOFSTATIC

I play whatever's needed to keep the song rooted, and nothing more. With so many layers of sound, noise and melody going on, I don't have the luxury of wandering too much. I play a four-string bass because four is plenty, thanks very much. Presidents Of The United States managed fine with five strings between the whole band, so maybe four is too many. I don't slap. The style just doesn't appeal to me. The musicians that got me excited about playing bass were mostly in hardcore punk bands. It was the spirit and energy that appealed to me, rather than technical mastery of an instrument. My first ever bass was a homemade Precision copy, of dubious origin. It was sky blue with a mirrored scratchplate, weighed a ton and had all the playability of a suspension bridge. For a long time, I thought that playing bass was meant to be that hard. My favourite ever bass was a Jazz copy, beautifully put together by a short-lived Canadian company called Signature. I think they ceased to exist years ago, and faded into obscurity. Sadly, mine was stolen in a break-in. I've never seen another like it. My bass heroes are Kim Deal and Simon Gallup. Their styles are both so essential to their respective bands. When the Pixies advertised for a bassist they specified 'no chops'. Her deceptively simple, no-nonsense basslines really tied the band together. I love how Simon Gallup's basslines work: they're fantastically hooky and melodic, always very present in the mix, but never self-indulgent. Our latest album is called *Wild Light*. In April, we'll be playing a week of dates in the UK and Europe.

www.65daysofstatic.com

GEAR
BASSES FENDER PRECISION
EFFECTS FULLTONE BASS-DRIVE, BOSS GEB7 BASS EQ, TECH 21 SANSAMP BASS DRIVER
AMPS SWR 750X, ORANGE AD200B, AMPEG SVT810

GEAR
BASSES MIKE LULL M5V, MAYONES COMODOUS
EFFECTS TECH21 SANSAMP RBI

JEROEN VAN VEEN, WITHIN TEMPTATION

I would describe my bass style as a basic, warm, supportive blanket. I play five-string bass, because that B string is essential in our music, but a sixth string would make a bass too cumbersome to play and move around with on a stage. I do not slap, because it doesn't suit our music, and I don't have the skills to make it work with the music we're playing. My first bass was an Aria Pro 2 Integra IGB-something-something. Definitely not bad for a starter bass, but I felt no love for the instrument itself. My favourite bass ever to date is my Ken Smith BSR-J 4. Unfortunately that model is discontinued and the other models are 'a bit' too expensive, but I would love to get my hands on a five-string Smith. My bass heroes? Geddy Lee, Pete Trewavas and Stanley Clarke were the ones that stood out when my father played music. Pino Palladino, Tony Levin and Les Claypool are all skilled and cool. Naming the greatest bass player that ever lived is a question I find too hard to answer, because I don't think in ways of the greatest. Maybe I should say my uncle, because he loaned me his bass gear when I wanted to start playing. For me, he is the greatest. We've just released our new album, *Hydra*, and there will be extensive touring after that. We get to come and play in the UK in April!

www.within-temptation.com

PHIL MAGEE, LIVINGSTON

I would describe my style as simple and melodic, I always like a good solid groove with melodic lines just in the right spaces. I've never been for or against five-strings, but I guess I don't really see a need for it in my music. Tuning down to D is low enough for me. It's the same with slap playing; it doesn't really have a place in what I do. The secret to playing the bass well is to listen to what the rest of the band are doing and work with them, especially the drummer. My first bass was a Hohner P-Bass: I still have it somewhere, covered in stickers and with the same pieces of paper holding the strings into the nut. It's hard to make it sound good, but it always stays in tune and it's fun to play. My favourite bass to date would have to be any really good P-Bass. When they're really good they cover everything I want and need from a bass. My bass heroes come mostly from the era when I was first learning to play: guys like Billy Gould, Tim Commerford, Stuart Zender and Justin Chancellor. More recently it's been Chris Wolstenholme and James Johnston. Currently the band has just finished our third album, *Animal*. We're really excited about this one as we did everything ourselves. It was just the four of us in a small house in the woods for the best part of last year, getting back to the roots of what the band is about. Now we're getting ready to take it out on the road.

www.livingstonmusic.co.uk

GEAR
BASSES GIBSON LES PAUL, EPIPHONE THUNDERBIRD, FENDER PRECISION
EFFECTS MXR EL GRANDE FUZZ, BOSS LINE SELECTOR, BOSS OCTAVE, BOSS TUNER, SANSAMP BASS DRIVER DI
AMP TRACE ELLIOT V TYPE, TRACE ELLIOT 4X10 CAB

GEAR
BASSES FENDER PRECISION
EFFECTS TECH 21 SANSAMP BASS DRIVER DELUXE, BOSS ODB 3 OVERDRIVE, ELECTRO-HARMONIX BASS BIG MUFF
AMPS ASHDOWN 550 TOURING HYBRID BASS COMBO

JOE LEVER, YOUNG KATO

My style is subtle, about locking in with the drums and driving the track to glue everything together and give the songs body and momentum. I use a pick for nearly all our songs as well. The secret of playing bass well is knowing what fits the song and the different parts around it, I think. Personally, I don't like it when people overplay just for the sake of it. I think it's all about discipline. My first bass was a Squier P-Bass. I got one for Christmas when I was about 12. I was obsessed with Green Day and saw that Mike Dirnt used a Precision, so I knew that was the one for me. I used a seriously nice '62 vintage Precision to record our album. That has got to be the best-sounding and -feeling bass I have ever played. The strings had not been changed since it was first made and it had a classy tone to it. My bass heroes are Mani, Paul McCartney, Peter Hook, Adam Clayton, Simon Gallup, Mike Dirnt, Paul Simonon and Walter Gervers of Foals. We've just recorded our debut album to be released later this year. We're off on a big tour with You Me At Six in March and April, and then we have a lot of headline shows and festivals this summer. Our next single 'Help Yourself' is out pretty soon as well.

www.youngkato.com

WAYNE BANKS, MESSIAH'S KISS

I play anything from thrash metal to Motown, on both four- and five-string bass: sometimes a song needs a low B string and it's a lot easier to instantly transpose a song on a five if the singer is suddenly having an off night. The secret of playing bass well is to lock in with the team and make people dance in whatever way they do. We're just court jesters, really. My favourite bass ever to date is 'The Plank', my 1978 Fender Precision, now with Badass bridge and Seymour Duncan pickups. It's had many a butchering. I bought this guitar with my YTS wage when I was 18 and have played it on most of the albums I've recorded and most of the gigs I've ever played since then. Materials-wise, this bass is the template for the two Warwick basses I now play. My bass heroes are Steve Harris, Billy Sheehan, Les Claypool, Flea, Jaco, Donald 'Duck' Dunn and James Jamerson. It's all about the melody as well as the groove: check the chorus of 'You're The One That I Want' from the *Grease* soundtrack. The new Messiah's Kiss album will be released in August. I've also just finished recording the new Persian Risk album featuring Phil Campbell from Motörhead and Don Airey from Deep Purple. Finally, I will be doing some live dates with Jaki Graham for her 30th anniversary, Persian Risk festival dates and Messiah's Kiss tour dates are on the way.

www.messiahskiss.com

GEAR
BASSES WARWICK STREAMER, FENDER PRECISION, FENDER JAZZ, MUSICMAN STINGRAY, MUSICMAN STERLING, WASHBURN AB35 ACOUSTIC, YAMAHA RBX
EFFECTS BOSS CS-2, TC ELECTRONIC POLYTUNE, SANSAMP BASS DRIVER DI, RAT DISTORTION, ELECTRO-HARMONIX BASS SYNTH, MXR BASS OCTAVE DELUXE, MU-TRON 3 PLUS, LINE 6 RELAY G50
AMP AMPEG SVT 3 PRO, 2 X AMPEG SVT AV 2X10 CABS

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THE BISCUIT'$ BA$$ BU$INE$$

A NEW COLUMN IN WHICH BASS TUTOR AND SESSION REGULAR GARY 'BISCUIT' BENNETT TEACHES YOU HOW TO MAKE MONEY AS A BASS PLAYER. IN THIS DEBUT COLUMN, BISCUIT LAYS DOWN SOME BROAD PRINCIPLES TO GET YOU IN THE RIGHT FRAME OF MIND . . .

I would like to wish you all a very warm welcome to my new column, Biscuit's Bass Business, where I will be covering topics that will assist those of you wishing to become a professional bass player. In my first few columns I will be aiming mainly at the less experienced bass-bashers among you, but I'll be catching up with you longer-term players very soon – so please bear with me: all will be revealed!

I'm a great believer in the old saying that if you want something badly enough, you'll get it in the end. With that in mind, let's get down to business. It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway for the sake of total transparency) that in order to turn your bass-playing hobby into a business, your playing ability needs to be at a very high level. You'll also need to attain as much knowledge of different genres of music as you can. These things will take quite some time – probably years, and possibly decades – but they're paramount should you wish to pursue a career in music.

> "DON'T BE FOOLED INTO THINKING THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS BECOME THE BEST BASSIST IN THE WORLD AND THEN EVERYTHING WILL FALL INTO PLACE"

The more adaptable you are, the better your chances of being offered more varied and lucrative work. And 'work' is the key word here. This is no walk in the park. To achieve your ambition of becoming a professional musician, you'll need to put in a great deal of effort, leading to many a sore finger or three – but I can assure you that if your dream is to become a full-time bass player, then it is worth every minute of your time and commitment. The good news is that with enough serious commitment you can become the professional musician that you always wanted to be.

Don't be fooled into thinking that all you have to do is become the best bassist in the world and then everything will fall into place. Even if you get to the point where you can play every bass-line known to mankind at 100mph, there is still much to learn. It will take a lot more than that to maintain a constant workload and in doing so sustaining a regular income, but never forget: it is possible.

The world is full of talented bass players, but most of them are shredding away at home, driving their neighbours insane, but there is so much more to it than that. You'll need to be recognised musically, visually and verbally, and these are the issues that I'll be going into in more detail in subsequent columns. Stay tuned my friends!

Gary 'Biscuit' Bennett is a freelance bass guitarist and tutor, covering Essex, London and the south-east, with many years of experience in the music industry under his belt. His CV includes hundreds of live performances and many domestic and international recording sessions. Awarded the title of Hartke's 'Best Unsigned Bass Player Worldwide 2008', Biscuit is currently an endorsing artist for Hartke, D'Addario, Planet Waves, Boss, Essential Sound Products and Hypnotic. Contact: @biscuitisation

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THE MU PAGE

THAT'S A NICE NEW BASS AMP YOU'VE GOT THERE – BUT MAKE SURE YOU'RE SAFE BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE PLUG, SAYS THE MU'S DAVE WEBSTER

All employers, self-employed and employees (duty holders) have legal obligations relating to the use and maintenance of electrical equipment under the Electricity at Work Regulations (EWR). As musicians, we need to be aware of these regulations not just for our own health and safety, but that of the audience as well. Basic understanding and maintenance can also protect you should you need to make an insurance claim.

PORTABLE AND FIXED EQUIPMENT

It is important to distinguish between portable and fixed equipment. It might sound simple, but electrical connections to portable equipment are more likely to be subject to wear and tear than those that form part of any fixed installation. Be aware of what is your responsibility so you don't get caught out.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance also matters and is important to determine if equipment is fully serviceable or any remedial action is necessary. It can include visual inspection, testing, repair and replacement. There are no absolute rules regarding the frequency of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) but regular testing – generally interpreted to mean annually by a 'competent person' – is recommended. You may need to do it more often, depending on the nature of the working environment, and how much wear and tear the equipment receives.

REMEDIAL ACTION

If there are any signs of damage or poor electrical standards, the equipment should not be used until it has been made safe – that could be a repair or replacement.

KEEP A RECORD

You also need to prove you have complied with the EWR. Keep full and accurate records of test results and equipment details, such as identification number, a description, serial number and time between tests. And please don't forget that when you replace an item, those details may be different so you will need to note them down again.

For further guidance, plus advice on everything from risk assessments to protecting your hearing, MU members can contact their Regional Office. See themu.org for more information or tweet us @WeAreTheMU.

> "IF THERE ARE ANY SIGNS OF DAMAGE OR POOR ELECTRICAL STANDARDS, THE EQUIPMENT SHOULD NOT BE USED UNTIL IT HAS BEEN MADE SAFE"

DAVE WEBSTER, MU NATIONAL ORGANISER – LIVE PERFORMANCE

"Keeping your gear in good shape is just as important as playing the right notes. Building confidence with engagers could ensure you get asked back and having all the right electrical safety checks in place will help that. Unsafe electrical equipment could invalidate your insurance policy, so take all reasonable care to ensure your gear meets the statutory regulations."

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Blue Sky Thinking

AFTER 20 YEARS IN THE LIMELIGHT, KORN BASSIST REGINALD 'FIELDY' ARVIZU IS STILL TAKING NOTHING FOR GRANTED. JOE DALY TRAVELS TO FIELDY'S INNER SANCTUM FOR A CHAT ABOUT THE SMALL MATTER OF 35 MILLION ALBUM SALES AND A LIFE AT THE BASS END... PHOTOS: KEVIN ESTRADA

"Music is not really my thing"

The brain's circuitry overloads trying to conceive the type of person that might issue such an absurdity. Certainly for anybody reading a magazine devoted to the unqualified majesty of the bass guitar, such a claim amounts to heresy of the highest order. Who would offer such a patently offensive remark? An irascible old accountant, poring over piles of dusty ledgers? A dour and humourless sister of the cloth, holed up in some spartan convent deep in the hills of Eastern Europe?

It goes without saying that these are among the last words one would expect to hear from the most innovative bassist of the 90s nu-metal revolution, especially one with an acclaimed new album, *The Paradigm Shift*, out late last year. And yet, as *BGM* sits down with Reginald 'Fieldy' Arvizu, co-founder and longtime rhythm specialist for Korn, this is precisely what he tells us.

Clearly we require more information – and so we press Fieldy to start at the beginning, ironically located in a home steeped in a rich musical tradition. "My dad was in a band and there was live music going on around me all the time," he tells us. "My parents played a lot of Commodores, Kool & The Gang, Eric Clapton, Led Zeppelin and a lot of different types of music from that era, because my mom and dad each had different styles."

While these roots ran deeply through the whole family, a darker energy pervaded Fieldy's home, where alcohol-fuelled clashes played out in vitriolic shouting matches, wanton brawling and plates bouncing off walls. "My house was always loud," the bassist recalls. "There was a lot of arguing going on, and there was always drinking and screaming and fighting at my house." To escape these clashes Fieldy sought refuge in the archetypal teenage retreat: music and solitude. "I just went into my room where I'd turn the music up and rock out."

Although the 90s witnessed the expansion of a staggering number of rock genres, few have weathered the erosion of time more durably than rap-metal: that blistering, groove-infused style that piled the punishing attack of heavy metal onto the rhythmic bounce of hip-hop. Considering Korn's uncontested prominence in this space, Fieldy's first two albums growing up are hardly surprising. "I remember getting the Sugar Hill Gang album *Rapper's Delight* on vinyl, and I remember getting an album by Kiss, so it was almost like rock and rap was my first thing – I was listening to both of them."

You might be forgiven for jumping the gun here and assuming that a short and direct line connects Fieldy's purchase of these albums to the formation of Korn, but this is not at all what happened. In fact, shortly after turning on to music, Fieldy turned it back off. "I pulled away from music," he recalls. "I started riding dirt bikes, which became my outlet." Although he sampled the punk diet of his high school friends, as well as more classic metal artists such as Dio, Fieldy remained squarely committed to motorbike riding until a high school friend showed him a video of a wiry bass player, shredded and feral, jumping, running about and detonating jaw-dropping waves of funk from a beat-up old bass. It is no overstatement to point to this moment as the birth of Korn's iconic sound.

"In high school," he recalls, "somebody showed me a Red Hot Chili Peppers video with Flea banging on the bass and jumping around, and I was like 'Wow, that's crazy!' That really got my attention. At the same time, they showed me another band called Faith No More, when they had Chuck Mosely as the singer, and those two bands blew my mind. One was heavy and one was funky, and I just started listening to those two bands and I thought, I wanna play bass." The rest, as they say, is… well, you know.

Playing in and out of bands around his home town of Bakersfield, California – a dusty inland town northeast of Los Angeles – Fieldy eventually joined forces with his friends, guitarists James 'Munky' Shaffer and Brian 'Head' Welch, along with drummer David Silveria, and together they formed the cheekily-named rock outfit, LAPD. Scoring a major label deal in short order, the lads were stunned to see their dreams of rock stardom quickly wither, as life imparted the first of many hard lessons. "We thought that if you got signed to a label, you'd make it. But that kind of went nowhere, so we told our singer that we were going to leave the label. He said 'I'm staying' and we said that we were leaving, so that's how we split and we went on a search for a singer." Fortunately for LAPD, they didn't have far to go to find their man.

"Head and Munky went to Bakersfield to see some band play," Fieldy says, "and Jonathan Davis was the singer. They came back and said, 'We saw this singer in Bakersfield called Jonathan Davis', and I said, 'You know what? I know that guy. My mom used to babysit him when we were kids, and his dad and my dad used to be in a band together'. So I got hold of him and he was like 'I can't do it. I'm already in a band,' but I said, 'Trust me man, you gotta come down'. So he came down to see us rehearse and he flipped out. He loved it. Then he sang, and as soon as he opened his mouth we loved it, right off the top."

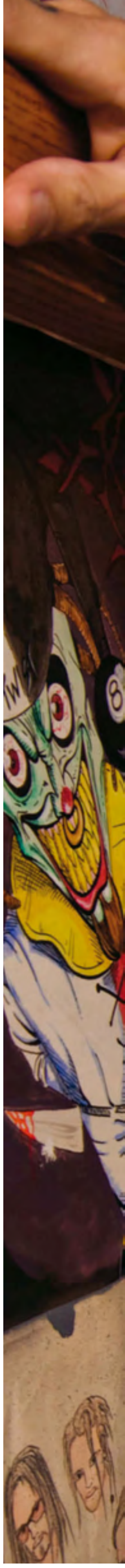
With the change of singer came the final tweak. They changed their name from LAPD to Korn, whose 1994 self-titled debut stands as one of rap-metal's halcyon releases. With a hyper-propulsive funk-metal sound charging beneath the raw, cathartic lyrics of Davis, the music offered something that was melodic, aggressive and utterly contemporary. Selling over 10 million copies worldwide, that record catalysed the nu-metal movement, galvanising a new generation of fans and musicians too young to care about Kiss and Mötley Crüe, but too old for the watered-down alt-rock that had been co-opted by 90s mainstream radio in the US.

Fieldy's playing style would organically emerge as a pastiche of funk, metal and the smooth fusion of one of the more venerable legends of the double bass. "I went through a phase where I listened to a lot of Stanley Clarke, but after hearing Metallica's *Kill 'Em All*, when I heard that heaviness I knew I had to fit in somehow, so I developed this style after listening to Sepultura, Metallica, Pantera, the Chili Peppers, Stanley Clarke and Faith No More."

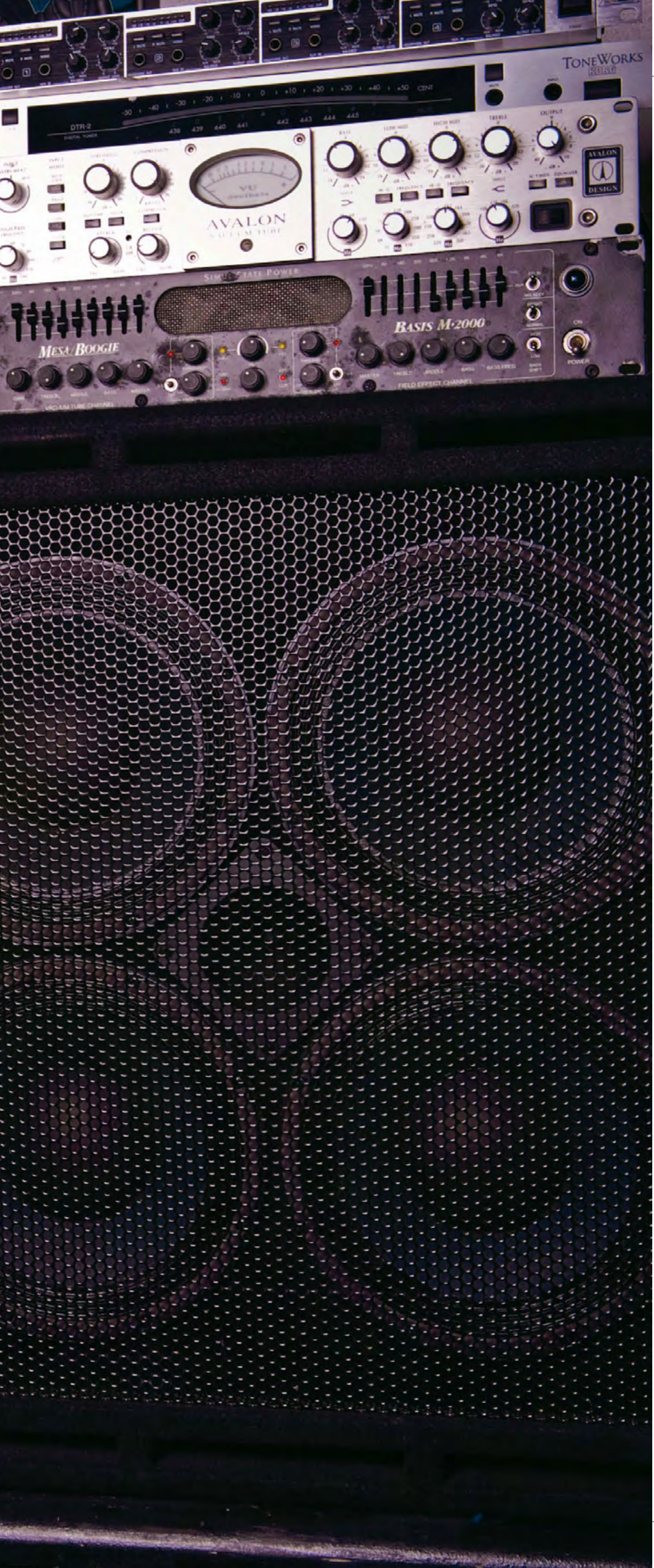
Around Fieldy's thunderous grooves and the dual-fretboard attack of Munky and Head, Korn understood that they had ignited a global rock revolution and resolved to settle for nothing short of total mainstream domination. Amazingly to everyone but them, that is precisely what they achieved. Of course, history aches from the weight of the headstones of thousands of artists unable to tap into life's elusive balance in the face of rapid success, and as successive releases brought the band unimaginable fame and fortune, the members of Korn fell prey to the seditious perils of rock'n'roll decadence.

"Everything happened so fast that I don't think we really took it in," Fieldy says as he considers how Korn survived. "Success just came flying at us at once: we got signed, recorded, we toured and everything was go, go go. MTV and everything just came at us hard." Ultimately, Head left Korn in 2005, as did Silveria a year later, both departures overshadowed by allegations of too much partying, heavy drug use and astonishingly public bouts of infighting. For his part, increasing reliance on pills and alcohol led Fieldy into his own dark period, though he remained in the band throughout his personal turbulence. Eventually, a well-documented conversion to Christianity brought an end to his increasingly violent self-destructive patterns, and with new drummer Ray Luzier, Korn eventually righted their ship. Their Lazarus-like resurrection was complete with the official return in 2013 to the fold of founding guitarist Head.

As one of Korn's primary songwriters, Fieldy's rhythmic style informs the approach of the other players to a much greater degree than other nu-metal bands of the era. His



"Every great player is defined by their picking hand. I teach people that all the time"



challenge was not so much how to craft bass-lines but how to fill the space created by the other players. He explains, "I'd try something cool with some percussion-style, tricky stuff in between [notes] because I was good with my right hand, which is your strumming hand. Your left hand is only for a few notes here and there. Even the best bass players only use a few notes here and there."

It is this technique, based on mastery of a percussive right-hand attack, that Fieldy identifies as the cornerstone of his playing. "I think that most people try to get good with their left hand," he explains, "learning scales and this and that, when every great player is defined by their strumming hand. For both guitar players and bass players, it's about how comfortable they are with their right hand. I try to teach people that all the time. Your strumming is where your playing develops its character. People take a liking to the strumming because that becomes the bounce and style of the player."

To develop this technique, he recommends a decidedly unorthodox approach: practising strumming over scales. "I tell people to keep working on your right hand – strumming, slapping and pulling. That's really the heart of it. Scales are pretty easy to learn. You can go on Google and learn scales all day. I went through a phase where I learned all my scales, but I don't really use them. If Korn's doing a thing where you can see that there's a scale involved, a lot of times you can use just one finger to play it. For bass players you've gotta have that right hand involved, because the pocket's going to come in as the bounce and the soul and the style!"

Outside Korn, Fieldy explores different styles through side projects such as his recently-completed solo album *Bassically*, on which he tackles a broad array of traditional styles while trying his hand at both stand-up bass and a Herculean 15-string bass, in addition to his Ibanez five-string. "It's maybe 15 songs or thereabouts, and I really just challenged myself and started doing multiple bass tracks. I did lead bass on there, with everything from jazz, funk, fusion, Latin, blues, reggae, every style of music. It takes you on a musical journey. I wanted to challenge myself and see how far I could go. I did it all by ear to see if I could play all those styles."

Fieldy also recently completed work on an album called *StillWell* with rapper Q-Unique, and he also maintains his own clothing line. We wondered if there were any musical mountains left to conquer for the bassist, which elicited his stunning response. "Music is not really my thing. I'm married with five kids. I'd rather take a trailer out with a bunch of standup paddleboards and kayaks and skateboards and bikes, and spend my day doing that. But when I do play or record, I give 100 per cent."

With Korn's global sales topping 35 million albums and a flourishing musical life outside that band, it's clear that music is in fact, very much Fieldy's thing. Perhaps it's just the traditional approach to music that bores him – after all, virtually all enduring creative movements begin with a defiant rejection of tradition. As Fieldy's passions play out in new albums, arena-packing tours and ambitious solo projects, it's clear that music buzzes through every strand of his DNA. Maybe it's just that after a couple of decades of traveling through hell and back, Fieldy has finally found the right rhythm – both on stage and in life. ■

Korn will be playing at London's Brixton Academy on 2 May. Their album* The Paradigm Shift *is out now. Info: www.korn.com

STUDIO TALK

AN OCCASIONAL COLUMN IN WHICH A BASSIST REVEALS BEHIND-THE-SCENES GEMS ABOUT A NEW ALBUM. THIS MONTH: RUTH GOLLER OF LET SPIN

Let Spin is a collaborative project that features original compositions by all four members: Moss Freed on electric guitar, Chris Williams on alto sax, Finlay Panter on drums and me on electric bass. My bass style is dirty when it needs to be, but also subtle and minimalist. I like to vary my methods from tune to tune, moment to moment, whatever I feel is necessary: to me, the strongest musicians are sensitive to what is going on around them, and are able to adapt quickly in order to make the music sound the best it can be.

I play a Fender Mustang plus a Music Man Sterling and a Kala U-Bass, with a Sansamp, a B.Assmaster and a Boss octave pedal, into an Orange AD 200 MK3 head and 4x12 cab. I have never really felt the need to play an extended-range bass: sometimes I tune down to a low D, which helps to give me that extra range, but I have managed so far in every other situation with a four-string bass – it might change one day though.

Slapping is not a sound I have ever really identified with. I have practised it at home, but in a gig situation it hardly ever gets used. Sometimes I enjoy slapping the strings with my whole hand to create a kind of thundery sound, but that sounds very different to the usual clean slap.

> "TO ME, THE STRONGEST MUSICIANS ARE SENSITIVE TO WHAT IS GOING ON AROUND THEM, AND ARE ABLE TO ADAPT QUICKLY IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MUSIC SOUND THE BEST IT CAN BE"

We all met through the London and Manchester jazz/improvised music scene and have played together in different bands before. We all bring our own style to the table and because everyone is so open and capable of creating good music, I think we've managed to find our own voice in the last year or two. The sound of the band varies quite a lot, as you can hear on the new album *Let Spin*, from dark raucous grooves to upbeat quirky riffs, via folk-influenced melodies and free playing. Among other dates, we will be playing some gigs at the South Tyrol Jazz Festival in Italy, which I am very excited about – it's where I grew up.

Info: www.letspinband.com

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OFF THE LEASH

LED BY THE INSPIRATIONAL BASSIST MICHAEL LEAGUE, SNARKY PUPPY ARE SET TO RETURN TO THE UK IN MAY FOR THEIR BIGGEST BRITISH TOUR TO DATE. MIKE FLYNN CAUGHT UP WITH LEAGUE TO FIND OUT HOW HIS BIG, BAD BASS SOUND PUSHES THE WHOLE BAND HIGHER

The very definition of a charismatic bandleader on stage, Snarky Puppy bassist Michael League is rarely seen without his trusty 1976 Fender Precision, he tells *BGM* in the run-up to his band's UK tour. "I own lots of different basses," he explains. "I have my workhorse 76 Precision, a 78 short scale Mustang, a 65 Höfner, a five-string Alleva Coppolo which I used on our *Family Dinner* and *Amkeni* albums, a D'Angelico EX-Bass and a 52 Precision that I just picked up, which will probably be my main instrument after I get a few things adjusted on it.

"I play each instrument when the music calls for it. Sound is everything, and each of these basses is very specific. I'm a four-string guy generally, because I play better – simpler, more rhythmically, more like a drummer – when I have less to work with. I feel like I have too many options with a five-string! It's crazy, but it's just about knowing myself and my tendencies. Also, my favorite bassists – James Jamerson, Larry Graham, Bootsy Collins, Pino Palladino and Tim Lefebvre – are all four-string guys. That's just the sound I hear in my head."

Snarky Puppy's latest groove-heavy opus, *We Like It Here*, features quite a lot of synth bass sounds. Were those parts played on the bass as well as via a bass-synth keyboard? "Yes, I played a lot of Moog Sub-Phatty on this album for sure," says League. "The music definitely called for that thick, sustained waveform that you can only get with a keyboard bass. I used a Pigtronix Philosopher compressor on it in small doses, but generally I was just generating the tone from the control panel on the Moog. They're so versatile, and so fat."

League fuels Snarky's monster sound with some trouser-flapping low-end frequencies: what pedals does he use to generate these sounds? "My main sounds are octaver, envelope filter, and analogue delay. For high-octave solo stuff, I use an Electro-Harmonix POG 2. For groove stuff with sub octave, I alternate between the Markbass Octaver, which is really industrial and cutty, and the MXR Bass Octave Deluxe, which is super deep and warm. It shakes windows for sure."

He adds: "In the envelope department, I use a Pigtronix Envelope Phaser, which is super quirky, I love it. I also use the MXR Phase 90, which sounds amazing on any instrument. For delay, I have an MXR Carbon Copy as my all-purpose sound and a Way Huge Aqua-Puss for extended, deep delays. They both sound amazing. I just recently fell in love with Moog's stompboxes: I've been using both their Drive and Tremolo pedals recently as well. They're so versatile! You can really hear the handmade quality and attention to detail in all of Moog's products."

There's a strong element of contrapuntal parts in League's writing. Does that start with a bass-line, with the other harmonic and melodic parts coming afterwards? "The bass-line is almost always the last thing I write," he tells us. "I'm a bassist, so I try to focus on the stuff that doesn't come as naturally to me first – melody, mostly. I know that I'll always be able to create a groove, so I leave it for last. I think that maybe, subconsciously, the bass-lines I create tend to be contrapuntal to the melodies, but it's never the other way around."

League endorses Markbass amps and speakers: what does he like about the sound of them? "I've always been a vintage Ampeg SVT guy, but Markbass's speakers changed the game for me. They have old-school depth, warmth and bump, but they also have serious clarity and can handle massive low end. The set-up I use whenever possible is their Tube 500 amp through both 4x10 and 4x8 cabinets. The 4x8 delivers that Motown midrange definition, Jamerson style, and the 4x10 absorbs the depth of my sub octave effects and key bass. I couldn't ask for a better sounding rig. They're also great people: my family is Greek and Markbass is Italian, so maybe that's why I feel like I'm really a part of their family. They definitely go out of their way to support my projects as well, which is hard to come by these days."

Snarky Puppy are on tour in the UK throughout May.* We Like It Here *is out now on Ropeadope. See www.snarkypuppy.com for info.

LONDON

THE LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW TOOK PLACE IN ASSOCIATION WITH *BGM* ON 1 AND 2 MARCH AND WAS, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE OF AN EVENT THAN LAST YEAR'S RUNAWAY SUCCESS. WE SENT INTREPID REPORTERS DUFF BATTYE, MIKE FLYNN AND DAVE CLARKE INTO THE MIDST OF THE LBGS TO REPORT ON THE BASSES, THE AMPS, THE FX, THE CELEBRITY GUESTS AND THE SMALL MATTER OF A HALL FULL OF SCREAMING DURAN DURAN FANS... WILL THE HALLS OF OLYMPIA EVER RECOVER? PICS BY ECKIE

Saturday 1 March

Our man at the frontline: Duff Battye

By 9.15am the queues were starting to form outside Olympia for the London Bass Guitar Show. The character that is TM Stevens arrived just before doors opened at 10am and got the masses ready for an amazing weekend of bass, shouting out in a call-and-response style, "Are we all ready to rock the house?"

Day one had some great masterclasses lined up from true legends of the instrument. Cincinnati funk maestro Freekbass kicked off the proceedings, declaring "I've heard about this show for a long time, and it's great to finally be here!" before delivering a fascinating insight into the techniques which he has developed in order to find his own voice as a player. Next up were Porcupine Tree's Colin Edwin and Lorenzo Feliciati. The two exponents of progressive technical bass playing treated the audience to performances from their Twinscapes project – a fascinating look into how two bass guitars can work together to create interesting sounds and textures.

A hugely anticipated event was the masterclass of Deep Purple legend Roger Glover, whose 45-minute talk saw the auditorium packed to bursting. His humble demeanour and good humour kept the audience entertained. During an extended Q&A session he delivered the ultimate bass-playing tip – "Find a great drummer and be really, really nice to him". Anthrax's livewire bassist Frank Bello finished proceedings in the masterclass area with a trademark high-energy look at his playing and life within Anthrax. Thrash metal is sometimes seen as a poor relation, in terms of technique, compared to other musical genres, but fast-fingered Frank showed us just how inaccurate that viewpoint is.

CALLING

PLAY TM STEVENS

PLAY Lee Sklar

PLAY Frank Bello

The great Lee Sklar opened up the Live Stage with a relaxed talk about his life and experiences as a bass player who has been at the very top of the session game for four decades. After beginning his career as a medical illustrator, Lee has become a mainstay of session bass, playing for the likes of Jackson Browne, James Taylor and Linda Ronstadt. TM Stevens then stepped up to deliver a hugely entertaining live show. Highlights included getting an 11-year-old bassist up to jam with his band and passing on some words of wisdom from the late, great Miles Davis: "It's not what you play, it's what you leave out." TM also explained that the key to great playing was to "turn off your head and turn on your heart."

BGM columnist and jazz icon Jeff Berlin delighted the audience with some lightning quick fingerwork on his new signature Cort Rithimic, while never losing the groove laid down by *Drummer* magazine editor Nick Carter. Rounding off the groove was Jamiroquai bassist Paul Turner and his band Shuffler. Paul showed why he is such an in-demand player – having toured with the likes of Tina Turner, George Michael, Annie Lennox and Tom Jones.

In the main auditorium the stars rubbed shoulders with the bass-playing public, while walking around a host of displays and stands. The industry side was well covered, with impressive stands from the likes of the Musicians' Union, BIMM College, the Academy Of Music and Sound and bass book company Bassline Publishing. These were complemented by the presence of the Bass Centre, Reading's Bass Gear, Promenade Music, Bass Direct and Strings And Things.

Amp manufacturers were well represented, with Gallien-Kruger, Aguilar, Ampeg, Markbass, TC Electronics and Mesa all enthralling the punters with must-have products. Eden director Luke Green told us about a general move to smaller amp set-ups,

saying "We are finding a lot of players who use our products are moving away from 800w amps and 8x10 cabs to the smaller Travelex 550 head and 6x10" cab. We're also seeing a huge amount of interest in our new Eden I-90 chorus pedal." Green also tells us that the company has signed up Johny Chow from Stone Sour as their latest big name endorsee. This move to smaller amps was mirrored by Warwick, who were receiving a lot of interest for their LWA 1000 amp head, which at only six pounds in weight produces a genuine 1000 watts.

Warwick's UK bass guru Nick Wells explains a particularly cool new addition to the German company's roster, saying "The 2014 Limited Edition Fortress is a real highlight for me, personally. We're only building 100 of them. A lot of people are surprised by the Nordstrand Fat Stacks pickups, and the birdseye polar top looks great with the Nirvana black finish. People can't put it down!" Höfner, Ortega and Spector had some lovely basses on display, as did Cort, whose aforementioned Rithimic bass with its alder body and spalted maple and padouk top was an obvious show highlight for many. Other high points in the exhibitors' hall included Freekbass, bouncing around the D'Addario stand, and the Elixir Strings stand, which featured a series of live performances, including two from sometime Robbie Williams/Paul Weller bassist Yolanda Charles.

As always, scratch below the surface of the London Bass Guitar Show and you'll find some great concepts and innovations on display from smaller manufacturers. On the gear front Hartke had discounted their hugely impressive Pitchblack Pro rackmount tuner. If you want a truly professional look on stage for under £100, then look no further. AC Guitars were back, showcasing their beautiful range of instruments, as were the likes of Andy Baxter Vintage Guitars, Rikkers, East UK, Anaconda Basses and Maraszczyk Instruments. Doug Mullen from Eve Guitars was showing off a stunning range of hand-crafted basses and guitars. Their bolt-on option is incredible value, at under £1000 for a unique handmade British bass.

FM Cables is bringing UK-based hand-crafting to the cable world and were having a great show. MD and bass player Ronnie Gray said, "We've been going for about two years now. I'm a gigging musician so I thought, why not try and make a guitar cable by musicians for musicians? The premise is quality products for musicians. We've already had Lee Sklar come and congratulate us, and Yolanda Charles and Steve Lawson are set to see us also. So there are lots of good vibes – and hopefully we'll be back here next year with a bigger stand."

One of the most radical designs came from the Sims/Enfield stand. Sims MD Martin Sims takes up the story: "We've launched a brand-new pickup system called Super Quad. The system has four separate coils in each pickup that can be independently switched. We can split the pickup horizontally and vertically which is totally new. When you have two pickups installed you actually have 15 configurations you can pick from. It's a completely new product that allows you to move past the classic pickup configurations into areas that are more unusual, such as a humbucker in the neck and a split coil in the bridge." A groundbreaking concept, as you'll know from our review in recent *BGMs*.

All in all, a hugely entertaining and informative day with a wealth of superstar talent on display. Now, I just need to save up for all of the above…

Ortega's stand prominently displayed their acoustic wares

Sunday 2 March

Our fearless foot soldier: Lieutenant Dave Clarke

Walking around Olympia's exhibitor-filled floor at the London Bass Guitar Show can be a disorientating experience. If it's not the Aladdin's cave effect of being surrounded by so many of the bass world's big name guitar, amp, FX and string manufacturers, then the sonic boom of what sounds like a bass orchestra warming up will certainly mess with your equilibrium. With sound readings peaking at 110db on more than one occasion, an on-the-hour air horn signals a much welcome time-out for both punters and exhibitors alike!

With a lot to see and not much time to see it in, I battle my way through the arse-quake of sound being created by everyone present. Showcasing Mesa Boogie and Dunlop, Westside Distribution have been having a successful show, debuting several new products, including their new all-tube Bass Strategy 8:88 and Bass Prodigy 4:88 amps, which they had flown over especially for the LBGS (but not before *BGM* had reviewed it, I might add!). "We've had a lot of interest in these," says Westside's Jonny X. "People still seem to want valve heads, so that's cool. We're also launching a couple of new products from Dunlop: the Super Bright bass strings, which have gone down really well, and also the Dunlop MXR preamp, which we really need to get over to *BGM* for you to try out!" Sounds good to us…

Meanwhile, at D'Addario's stand, product specialist Brandon Medici is excited about their new Flex Steel strings, which the company claims could change the lives of slap and fingerstyle players. Medici says: "It took us the better part of two years and over 100 prototypes before we were satisfied. The scope was a very flexible, articulate slap-funk string that we got a throaty, punchy vibe from, while still having a loose, softer feel. That's a hard string to make, and a hard string to make consistently if you're not careful. We started to experiment, and halfway through the project we had found the core-to-wrap and wrap-to-wrap ratios that we really liked – but then we came across this Flex Steel alloy and that's when everything clicked. Everyone threw their hands up and was like, 'This is it. We've done it!' Since we put it out we've had resounding feedback from everybody. The Flex Steels have the advantages of nickel as a very flexible, bright, articulate funk string, but also the advantages of the ProSteel string, which is really throaty and really punch – it's the best of both worlds."

Situated in the quietest part of the exhibition is Paul from The Custom IEM Company, who represent in the UK 10 of the most popular global brands, including 1964 Ears, JH Audio, Shure and Puretone. It's their first time at the LBGS, and he tells us that in-ear monitoring is a real growth area. "Hearing protection is definitely key these days. The days of just a wedge should really be long gone. In-ear monitoring provides ambient protection and a controlled mix in your ears, allowing you to perform better." Interestingly, Paul tells *BGM* that bassists are late to the party compared to our rhythm section partners in crime: "Drummers are making so much noise that they seem a bit more focused on hearing protection. Thankfully, there's a bit of a catch-up taking place with players of other instruments these days."

Martin from TC Electronic has been feeling the love in London after a very successful year for the Scandinavian company. "It's been really busy this year, and it's such a pleasure for me, coming from Denmark to London and meeting and hanging out with everybody. Two days of great fun and bass. We feel honoured to be here and see the response to our products." What's new from TC at this year's show? "Last year we introduced the BG250 1x15 combo and it was the biggest-selling combo in Europe, so we've extended the line with a 12", a 2x10 and a little BG250-208 combo with two 8" speakers. We've been very proud of that, but, sales-wise, the foundation of our company is still our RH series."

Addressing the omnipresent sound of multiple bassists indulging their passion, Martin laughs as he points out that it could be worse: "Recently, in Denmark I was in a room half the size of this with 200 drummers playing, at the same time but not together. That was the worst sound of all time, so I perceive this event as nothing but good times!"

Max Shuter from Polar Audio is showcasing Gallien-Krueger, albeit later than planned, as he explains, "We've got some new products with us that we should have had last year, but because Gallien-Krueger amps are all handmade in a little workshop in California, the quantity doesn't filter through until further down the line. We've got the new MB Fusion 800, which is 800 watts with a tube pre-amp, and the complementary cabs that go with it which are neodymium and very light. We have lots of very powerful but portable gear."

G-K isn't the only big name that Polar Audio has brought to the party this year. Max says, "We took on Ampeg in June last year, so it's our first London Bass Guitar Show where we've been showing Ampeg, which has been absent for the last year or two. It's going really well. Obviously, G-K and Ampeg are quite different brands; a lot of big-name soul, funk and R&B players for Justin Timberlake, Rihanna and Katy Perry are using G-K rigs because they've got that clean, modern sound, while the Ampeg gear has the big bottom end, the warmth for the rock'n'roll stuff and metal players. It's got that edge, you can drive it hard and it'll break up nicely. They voice differently and so appeal to different areas of the market. It's like beef and chicken: they both taste delicious, it just depends what you fancy on the day!"

In one of the afternoon's quieter moments, I ask Dave Boonshoft, president of Aguilar Amplification, how the show has been for him this year. "We've had

a great time," he replies. "We've met a lot of great bass players looking for new gear. In the last year and a half we've worked very hard at expanding our pickup line, so this year we have five- and six-string P-bass pickups. We've also expanded our soap bar offerings, our Dual Ceramic Bar pickups. And this year we're with a distributor here in the UK, Barnes & Mullins. We're so pleased to be with these guys, they're a great company. That's a big change for us, and we'll be widely available in the UK."

As it's the second day of the LBGS, did Boonshoft indulge in any of Saturday night's après-show festivities? "Of course! We all got together last night at the Albion pub for a blowout – that was fantastic. Dave Swift was there, Paul Turner, Darryl Anders from Dunlop, Yolanda Charles… It was pretty heavy. I hung out as long as I could, and there was a lot of great music and a lot of great people. Another great year for the London Bass Show."

As the cacophony of bass fires up once again, I ask Boonshoft if he'll be seeking therapy to get over the weekend? "I'm already in counselling," he says. "I'll just bring it up at my next session!"

Doctor Foster

"Do you think that went all right?" Mo Foster asks *BGM* after his live performance and Q&A session on the Live Stage at the London Bass Guitar Show. He can rest assured that it went very well indeed: he has just enthralled a room full of people in awe of the bassist who, after 46 years in the business, has more credits on his CV than Ben-Hur had extras. However, our chat is quite rightly put on hold so that Foster can catch Lee Sklar's masterclass, to which end we duly escort one legend towards another. Afterwards, *BGM* asks Foster if he'd experienced any nerves while addressing an auditorium full of fellow bassists. With typical warmth, Foster laughs as he replies, "No, it's a rare treat. It's certainly never happened before."

As Foster heads over to the *BGM* stand for a signing session, I ask him about his latest book, *British Rock Guitar*. "It's a collection of stories assembled over decades, because musicians are wonderfully stupid, and I've just absorbed them all and categorised them." He adds, "Someone said when a person dies it's as though a library's burning down, and in this case it's true because 25 of the people I interviewed in the book have now died, which is very sad. Jet Harris, Joe Morreti, Gerry Rafferty… a lot of people have gone, but the stories are there. The book is a mixture of serious history and hysterical stories – and they are very stupid, some of them!"

As we reach the signing stand, Mo bumps into Sklar. The ol' bass warriors share a warm embrace, before Sklar takes a picture of Mo flipping the bird towards his camera's lens. Clearly pleased to see his old friend, Foster says to *BGM*, "Lee's great, isn't he? I'm so pleased to see him." **Dave Clarke**

Taylor Made

There's a queue stretching around the corner and out of sight, a full hour before Duran Duran bassist John Taylor takes to the stage for his Q&A with *BGM* editor Joel McIver. Shortly before he does, though, there's time for a quick chat backstage.

It's JT's first time at the London Bass Guitar Show, and he admits that appearing before a room of bass players is unlike anything he's done before. "It's a little intimidating!" he laughs, "but it's great to be around the enthusiasm for the instrument and the music. We're not a dying breed, but we certainly have to pull together in the face of the rising tide of technology… and the bass sample! We're not quite a classical instrument yet."

The last time *BGM* interviewed JT was at the beginning of the promotional tour for his bestselling autobiography, *In The Pleasure Groove* (see *BGM* 85). That was 18 months ago, so I ask if the book had effectively caused him to undertake the longest promotional tour of his career. Without missing a beat, John makes one thing clear: "This is a standalone event. I would have done this whether I'd have been signing books or not. This, to me, is not about promoting the book. This is about promoting the bass guitar in Great Britain."

What advice would JT give to anyone thinking about picking up the instrument? "Looking for inspiration in bass guitar, you have to look further and further today," he muses. "You probably won't

find it in the Top 40. I find that I have to go back constantly. I think of the 70s as the golden age of the bass, because it was the golden age of electric rock music, really. That's where I tend to go for my inspiration. I was listening to *Quadrophenia* the other day, and you're not going to find anything as inspiring as that in the charts today. But having said that, you've also got to figure out how to present it in a contemporary way. If you're going to make modern records, you've probably got to work with technology. You've probably got to have some fairly fat-sounding synth in your pocket, you've gotta know how to pull a few different tricks. I've been doing that with the new Duran Duran album, finding ways for the bass to speak, with a lot of detuning – seeing what we can do in ProTools, but trying to keep the human feel while making it, so that it can compete with these fat bass records that we're listening to."

With our time up, JT heads for the Live Stage to give the packed auditorium a fascinating insight into his bass-playing, career and influences, while also treating the audience to an impromptu round of 'name that JT bass-line'. Was it me, or did it seem as if there were suddenly a lot of ladies in the room? **Dave Clarke**

Le Freak

Cincinnati native Freekbass had the honour of opening a weekend of big-name masterclasses at the London Bass Guitar Show. Freek (to his friends) bounded onstage with his trademark energy and enthusiasm, with the crowd witnessing an inspiring blend of funk grooves. He introduced a mantra, which he has brought to his own bass playing, based on learning to develop your own voice as a player. Focusing on examples of this philosophy in his own playing, he said that he realised early in his career that picks were not for him but he needed to use a 'pick-like' technique – so he developed a double thumbing method, using his thumb to great effect as a plectrum. He also developed subtle dynamics with his "hard mute bounce" method – plucking hard while only lightly fretting notes. Unsurprisingly, given the clarity and ease of delivery of his masterclass, he is also a bass tutor (more information at www.truefire.com). He also has a new studio album due later this year through www.freekbass.com. **Duff Battye**

Purple Reign

Space was at a premium for Roger Glover's LBGS performance, which was a fascinating insight into the personality of one of rock's great bassists. Glover has sold over 100 million albums with Deep Purple, inspiring generations of players and earning production credits with the likes of Judas Priest and Nazareth along the way, but he remains a humble and humorous man. He talked about his love of skiffle, and particularly 1950s artist Lonnie Donegan, and how the simplicity of that genre's bass playing inspired and informed him. Drawing examples from Purple's classic catalogue such as 'Woman From Tokyo' and 'Smoke On The Water', he emphasised that for him, it's all about keeping it simple. This also applies to his bass set-up – he uses hardly any effects, preferring to rely on his combination of Vigier bass and TC Electronic amplification. Surprisingly, he also admitted that, to him, bass playing has always been "a means to an end: to allow me to write songs". Asked if he had any tips for success, he quipped: "If you need a formula, then I would say find three good musicians and tag along with them. It worked for me!" He closed a wonderful masterclass by saying Deep Purple are planning to start work on a new studio album with producer Bob Ezrin in late 2014. **Duff Battye**

In The Loop

"Bassists are a strange breed. It's not often we end up on the same gig in large numbers, so any chance we do get to meet up is to be celebrated," Steve Lawson says. "Likewise many of the tools we use to make music are pretty exotic and rare, and it can require something of a Herculean effort to track them down and try them out. Thus the 'bass show' concept has its simplest attraction – lots of bassists getting together to hang out, chat, check out and often buy new gear. But there's more to the London Bass Guitar Show. Much more: a full programme in the masterclass and performance rooms, away from the incessant rumble of the show floor, where great ideas and beautiful music can be experienced in a listening atmosphere, and inspiration that may stick with us for a lifetime can be absorbed. The size of the show also makes it possible to meet our heroes in ways that their usual arena gigs will never allow. Bass players, bass toys and bass legends. It really doesn't get much better than that!" **Mike Flynn**

Keeping It Progressive

"When I first started playing bass in the pre-internet times, there wasn't even a dedicated bass magazine, let alone a yearly event where you could see legendary players doing their thing up close while checking out all the latest gear," says Porcupine Tree and Twinscapes bass wizard Colin Edwin. "I'm very glad to see that all that has changed in a big way: the level of interest and enthusiasm in the bass has never been higher, which has really expanded the possibilities that any and all bass players can take advantage of. This year was my first time attending the London Bass Guitar Show, so it was also great to experience the warm reception to our Twinscapes performance, and with all the other events and stalls it was impossible to come away without feeling inspired. I've always admired the energy, creativity and dedication of luthiers and there was plenty of that on display with all kinds of different makers showing off their creations. As a bonus I was able to hook up again with some old friends, and also put faces to names I'd only previously exchanged emails and phone calls with. Events like the London Bass Guitar Show can give us all a bit of a chance to learn something, discover things, check out possibilities we maybe hadn't previously considered and generally evolve a bit. Long may it continue!" **Mike Flynn**

Watch out for news of the London Bass Guitar Show 2015 in due course. Visit www.londonbassguitarshow.com, www.facebook.com/londonbassguitarshow or @bassguitarshow for updates and information.

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TESTING TIMES

STEVE DIGIORGIO IS THE THINKING MAN'S EXTREME METAL BASSIST, HAVING LAID DOWN TECHNICAL GROOVES WITH CLASSIC BANDS LIKE DEATH TO HIS CURRENT GIG WITH THRASH VETERANS TESTAMENT. *BGM* MEETS THE MAN

I played everything from bass clarinet to tuba to trombone at school, and in my teens everybody started learning riffs off their favourite albums, which is when I decided bass was for me. My mom was very musically oriented: she listened to Elvis and the Beatles and Dave Brubeck and Herb Alpert. Anything current that was on the radio in the early 70s. Later in the 70s, when disco came out, the bass players were so upfront. That helped me pursue the instrument. I got into Jethro Tull, Rush, Sabbath and Maiden: bands with bass players who carried a lot of the weight. That really helped train me to find my own style.

Before I got the call to join Testament a few months ago, I had been touring with Death: DTA, essentially a tribute act to Death. [Editor's note: the original Death dissolved when its founder Chuck Schuldiner died in 2001 – DiGiorgio played on three of their albums.] Before rehearsals, I checked the recordings of my bass from the original album sessions and I picked out 90 per cent of what I played back then, to keep the song true, but we're all evolving so I changed a couple of things so they felt better, 20 years later. When it came to the songs that I didn't originally record, I played them as close to the record as I could. These are aggressive metal bass-lines: there's not really too many variations you can do, although we probably jazzed some of the parts up a little, because that's what we do and that's our style. I'm sure we upset some purists, but the bottom line is that we had the spirit of the band intact.

What was Chuck like? That's the question I get asked most! My involvement with Chuck was great: I'd known him since we were teenagers. I was around for pretty much his whole career and it was all positive. He was one of the most open-minded, go-with-the-flow musicians I ever met and he was nothing but encouraging to me.

I play 90 per cent fretless bass. I use fretted instruments when I have to play something specific that requires that sound, and in fact I don't have an answer to the question about why I prefer fretless. The tonal quality and the feel of fretless are the things I prefer about it. I did play double bass as a kid, I suppose, but I'm not sure it that comes into it as far as playing metal bass. Maybe it does: I don't really know. Either way, I find fretless more expressive. The two instruments just have different qualities. I like to use every tool in the box and if I can, I like to be good at everything.

Nowadays I alternate between two Thor basses, the Mjolnir models. I have a six-string fretless and a five-string fretless modified into a three-string. They are amazing! I use Rotosound 666LD strings, Nordstrand pickups, Bartolini preamps, Hipshot tuners, Nady wireless, DOD, Dunlop and MXR effects and Ampeg amplification. Thor is a one-man-shop up in the wilderness in New Hampshire, and I came across them after I had been with ESP for a long time and I was looking for something unique, rather than just being one of a million. I wanted to do something different, and a bass player on my web forum passed me a couple of links to more unusual basses, so I looked into it and got hold of the guy. The visuals grabbed me, and Thor made it clear that they really care about what they do, so I gave them a shot and it was the best bass I've ever played in my life. ■

Info: www.stevedigiorgio.com.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

ANDY HUGHES MEETS SEAL'S BASSIST PAUL SUMMERLIN FOR A CHAT ABOUT A LIFE IN THE SOUL ZONE

Paul Summerlin has been the bassist of choice for pop-soul legend Seal for a number of years now, chosen for his individual bass style and his backing vocals. Summerlin gained his experience in a band with his brothers in New Orleans where he grew up, playing guitar and keyboards. The choice of instruments led him to some interesting manual acrobatics, he tells us…

"My brother Mark turned out to be a better guitarist than I was," Paul remembers. "So when I was around 15, I picked up the bass and found that my hands were suited to it and I liked playing it, so I stuck with that. I ended up playing bass and keyboards in fact, in our college band; I did both at the same time. I used to do some hammer-ons with my left hand and keyboards with my right hand. I used to call it musical aerobics!"

Paul has a special affection for his Gibson Thunderbird, he reveals. "I have a T-Bird at home which is my baby. I have a Nashville which I bought in the 70s, which was a vintage. Our manager at the time was friends with a guy who ran a Gibson dealership and he invited us over for a look through their stock. I played everything he had and asked if there was anything else. The manager told me he had this old T-Bird stored away in a cupboard, and I opened the door, and it was just there glowing, saying 'Play me...' I can't even tell you what I got that bass for; it was such a great price. In the 90s, I played a Guild Pilot bass which I absolutely loved; I don't think they make them any

"GENE SIMMONS COULD TEACH ME THAT 'ROCK GOD' APPROACH TO PLAYING. HOW TO REALLY PUNCH IT OUT THERE, LIKE HE DOES"

more. That was the fastest bass I have ever played. Now, I play Fender which I also love. Nothing takes the place of my T-Bird, but that stays at home. I could bring the T-Bird out, but it's quite cumbersome. It has that big body, and it doesn't fit into the case with everything else as easily, so I would have to have a special case made. I just leave it at home."

Let's be honest, all of us like to look around when we pass an instrument store, and Paul knows very well what he wants when he goes looking for basses. "For me, it's the neck first, that has to feel right. If the bass is set up right for you when you pick it up, that will influence your decision. Obviously cost is a factor: you'll know before you go into the shop what the good companies are and the models which you'd like to have, and more importantly, the ones you can afford to consider. When you plug in and play, that will edge you towards the final decision."

Along with his bass duties in Seal's band, Paul also handles backing vocals, and as he tells us, his vocals tend to take up his attention on stage, while the bass has to find its own way. "One of the reasons I was brought into this band was to sing backing vocals, and those parts have to be perfect. I always put my mind into my vocal part first, and let the bass take a less vital path for that time. There's nothing fancy or too attacking in my playing style because the vocal has to be absolutely spot-on, so the bass can ride a little. I may make a line simpler in this bar or that bar, but the vocal safety has to be in place. I can get away with a simpler bass-line in a certain section of a song, but I can't get away with a messed-up vocal line because everyone is going to notice that. Don't get me wrong, the bass is very important, and Seal knows about bass because he plays a lot of the bass on his studio recordings. But he understands that sometimes the bass may not be as technical as it could be, because the vocal is taking the attention in my mind, and he's fine with that: he knows how it goes."

As Seal understands bass-lines, is he prescriptive about what you play? "Oh yeah, very much," Summerlin explains. "One thing we've been enjoying during the last tour was putting in new songs that weren't worked out for the original stage shows. Some are songs from previous albums and others are brand new, and when we were in rehearsals working on them, Seal has come over and sung to me the lines he wanted me to play, which is not what is on the records. I really enjoyed working out exactly what Seal wants, working towards that sound, finding it, and then practising until I can deliver it with the band on stage every night, just how he wanted it to be."

When asked to choose a dream one-to-one bass lesson, Summerlin's choice may come as something of a surprise. "This may sound silly, or it may not, but I would pick Gene Simmons!" he responds with a grin. "I can play every bass-line Gene has ever written, note for note. I learned them when I was in college and I was a massive Kiss fan, so I can play them technically, but what I want is to learn from him about how his guts and his mind went into creating those lines. I would love to learn that from Gene. I have quite a traditional approach to playing the bass: I like to keep my lines down low and anchor the song I am playing. Gene could teach me that 'rock god' approach to playing: how to really punch it out there, like he does."

While we're on the subject of learning, is there any specific technique that Paul would like to pin down? "I don't think there is any specific technical skill that I know I haven't got, and that I want," he muses. "I used to play in a progressive band in the 1990s, and we played a lot of technically demanding stuff then, but it was never at the expense of the lyric, and that still holds true now. The thread that has run through my playing as a professional has been about serving the song, and I think one note with feeling will serve a song better than 20 notes." Wise words. ■

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

AFTER FOUR DECADES IN THE SPOTLIGHT OF BASS, SESSION AND STUDIO LEGEND LAURENCE COTTLE IS AS BUSY AS EVER. BGM GETS AN UPDATE ON THE WELSH WONDER'S CAREER

I have some concerts coming up with my big band celebrating the genius of Jaco Pastorius. I transcribed the music after I'd been in touch with Jaco's wife, Ingrid, to see if I could get the music for it, but the charts weren't available. So I made my own arrangements of 'Donna Lee' 'John & Mary' and twelve other songs for the classic big band set-up – four trumpets, four trombones, five saxes, flute and percussion. We're playing at Ronnie Scott's in June and there's a tour in Scotland on November, you can see clips on Youtube.

I just had a great stint at Ronnie Scott's: I did six shows with Al Jarreau and then a week with Pee Wee Ellis and Fred Wesley of the JBs, the late James Brown's backing band. I'm currently recording a project with Gavin Harrison of Porcupine Tree: I've arranged eight Porcupine Tree songs for the big band, which has been a challenge because it's interesting music with odd time signatures. I'm really pleased with the results.

What else? I've been writing library music for years, and I still enjoy recording them. Some of these are used in *Oprah*, *Friends* and *Spongebob Squarepants*! I get a small royalty every time they're used, so the thing to do is to have a load of those things out there beavering away for you: I've written over 200 of these. I'm still playing with Claire Martin, the jazz singer, and I've been doing a conducting job with the RTE Orchestra through Claire. That was nothing to do with bass, it was just me strolling up on stage and waving my arms about. I've always wanted to play and develop and progress as a player, so what I do supports that.

My gear these days is pretty simple. I play a Bernie Goodfellow GB Rumour, which is a great bass. I also have my trusty Wal fretless five-string, which I play a lot, and a Yamaha TRB. I've got a few old Fenders in the collection, including a 63 Precision and a 72 Jazz as well as a new Jazz five. There's also a couple of Squiers, and a Washburn acoustic fretless, which is really nice. I've mostly played five-string for the last 20 years.

I still love the bass guitar as much as ever: it's my instrument, after all. I started on trombone, playing trad jazz in the 70s in my dad's band, and he wanted to change the line-up to make it a dance band, so I moved to bass. I was passionate about the electric bass, and have never learned upright.

In 1982 I moved to Los Angeles for four years to play sessions with Black Sabbath and other bands, and after that I moved back to London to join the Alan Parsons Project. That was a good lesson in studio etiquette: we spent a lot of time kicking ideas around. It wasn't technically demanding, not like the music I play with musicians like Django Bates. I'll have to show you some of the stuff I play with him: it's great music, fiendishly complex and wonderful to play. In September I will be at the Covent Garden Opera house performing 'Anna Nicole' by Mark Anthony Turnage, another composer who I greatly admire.

Studio dates are not as plentiful as they were in the 80s, and I now record in my studio at home. Tracking a bass part on my own is fun, but a bunch of guys in the studio all playing live is best. I just recorded another album with Don Airey and this was all recorded live with no overdubs or fixes. I've just finished a European tour with this band.

I'm still working hard on my bass playing. Physically, I must be slowing down, because I'm getting on a bit! But my hands are OK and I keep my ears open for new music.

Info: www.laurencecottle.com

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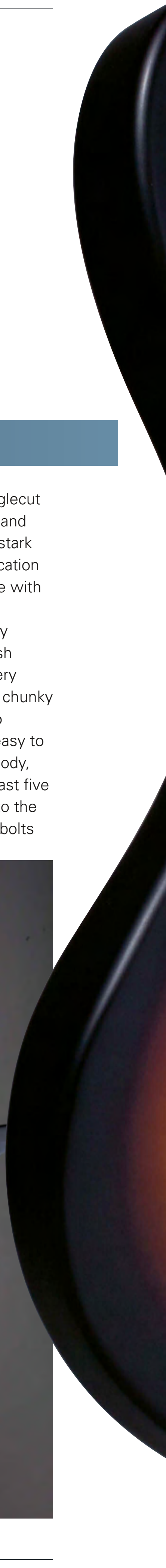
BRUBAKER
Brute MJXSC 4 and 5

KEV SANDERS GIVES THESE TWO BRUBAKER BEHEMOTHS THE ONCE-OVER. ARE THEY AS BRUTAL AS THEIR NAMES SUGGEST?



Singlecut basses, where a solid top bout is fixed to the neck along its entire length, seem to be quite the thing at the moment. Most are pitched towards the top end of the market, often costing seriously big bucks. But here's one with a unique 'Bolt-Thru' neck system, by one of the most respected luthiers working today. It's also available for less than 700 quid. Now I'm interested. Perhaps representing even more bang for your buck is the four-string version, which does without the singlecut design, but still looks great and manages to pull off that neat trick of looking both contemporary and traditional at the same time. And check out that scratchplate…

BUILD QUALITY

I should point out straight off that although these basses are indeed designed by the legendary Kevin Brubaker, the reason they retail at such a tempting price is that they're manufactured in the Far East. Not that you'd know: the fit and finish are excellent. That singlecut design makes for a complex and difficult joint between neck and body, and it's made all the more obvious on this bass by the stark difference in colours. But here it's tight and neat; a good indication that these basses, although mass-produced, have been made with close attention to detail and high standards.

The neck on the five-string Brubaker is made of high-quality maple, although you'd never guess. The solid satin-black finish not only looks good in a Transformers kind of way, it's also very comfortable, feeling satin-smooth to the touch. It has quite a chunky profile, but the narrow-ish string spacing, well-finished jumbo fretting and rosewood fingerboard make it comfortable and easy to play. The neck extends halfway down the length of the ash body, which has a socket routed to take a 'tongue' that forms the last five or six inches of the neck-blank. So the neck extends deep into the body, and as if this weren't enough, there are also four neck bolts

CONTACT DETAILS

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BRUBAKER BRUTE MJXSC 4
PRICE | £629
BODY | Alder
NECK | Maple, slim taper contour
FRETS | 22 Medium Jumbo
FRETBOARD | Maple
FRETBOARD RADIUS | Compound Radius; 16" at nut, 20" at last fret
NUT WIDTH | 1.75"
STRING SPACING | 19mm
SCALE | 34"
PICKUPS | MM/J; Brubaker 3200 Series Dual Coil Humbucking Pickup (Bridge), Brubaker 3200 Series Single Coil Pickup (Neck)
ELECTRONICS | Brubaker 5200 Series Active Two Band EQ
HARDWARE | Nickel/Chrome
BRIDGE | Brubaker High Mass Bridge
STRING NUT | Bone
COLOURS | Merlot, Tobacco Burst, Natural
GIG BAG INCLUDED? | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Great looking four-string made with the same high-quality timber, hardware and electronics as its five-string sibling.
MINUS | Still not sure about that headstock design. No front dot markers.
OVERALL | Versatile bass with a quality of sound that matches the looks. Custom maple pick guard and gig bag included makes it a serious contender

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★★★☆

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

BRUBAKER BRUTE MJXSC 5
PRICE | £699
BODY | Ash or alder
NECK | Maple
FRETS | 22 medium jumbo
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETBOARD RADIUS | Compound radius: 16" at nut, 20" at last fret
NUT WIDTH | 1.75"
STRING SPACING | 19mm
SCALE | 34"
PICKUPS | MM/J; Brubaker 3200 Series Dual Coil Humbucking Pickup (bridge), Brubaker 3200 Series Single Coil Pickup (neck)
ELECTRONICS | Brubaker 5200 Series Active Two Band EQ
HARDWARE | Nickel/Chrome
BRIDGE | Brubaker High Mass Bridge
STRING NUT | Graphlon
COLOURS | Merlot, Tobacco Burst
GIG BAG INCLUDED? | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

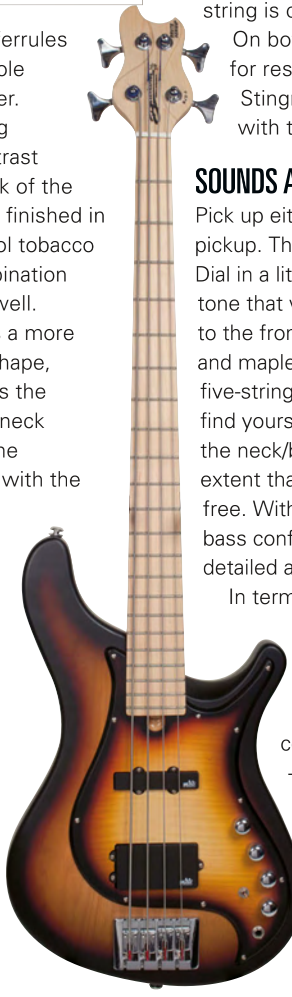
PLUS | Well made with quality woods and components. Amazing sustain
MINUS | Fairly heavy, headstock design and logos lack a little finesse
OVERALL | One of the best buys for a five-string out there at the moment, for sounds, looks and value. The Brubaker 5 looks like a compelling choice

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★★★☆

set into chrome ferrules clamping the whole assembly together. This neck is going nowhere! In contrast to the hi-tech look of the neck, the body is finished in a lovely old-school tobacco sunburst, a combination that works very well.

Although it has a more traditional body shape, the four-string has the same 'Bolt-Thru' neck construction as the singlecut, and as with the five-string, the fit and finish are pretty much flawless. One thing that really grabs the attention is that sunburst flame maple pickguard. This is normally a £70 upgrade, but at the moment is included in the price, as is the gig bag that comes with both these basses.



Just like the woodwork and shiny finish, the electronics and hardware on these basses is top notch for instruments at this price. Both have MM/J configuration pickups branded 'Brute by Brubaker'. The neck pickup is a 3200 series single coil 'J' type, while the bridge pickup is a twin coil humbucker, which can be coil-tapped via the small toggle switch if required. The Brubaker 5200 Series preamp has an active two-band EQ, with volume, pickup pan, treble boost/cut, and bass boost/cut. The chromed high-mass bridge gives you all the adjustment you'd need and the tuners are generic M4 types, slanted back towards the player and chromed to match the rest of the hardware.

Strapped on, these Brubakers are pretty hefty: there's a lot of dense ash and maple in these instruments, but both are comfortable. On the five-string, the balance is excellent due to the singlecut design, and this makes it comfortable to play on the strap, even over long periods. As you'd expect, the four-string is considerably lighter, and just as well balanced. On both basses, the back pickup placement is ideal for resting your thumb on while playing – not unlike a Stingray. And that's not the only similarity I found with that bass.

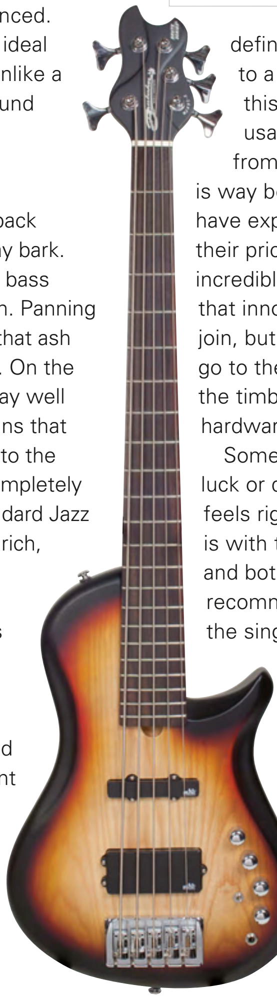
SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Pick up either bass and turn the pan control to the back pickup. The sound has that glorious, punchy Stingray bark. Dial in a little extra bass boost and you have a great bass tone that would work in nearly any musical situation. Panning to the front pickup highlights another benefit of all that ash and maple: a slap sound that's both full and cutting. On the five-string in particular, soloing is something you may well find yourself doing a lot. That singlecut design means that the neck/body join can be scooped out at the back to the extent that access to the very top of the neck is completely free. With the coil tap on, you basically have a standard Jazz bass configuration, and that's just how it sounds – rich, detailed and with amazing sustain.

In terms of tone, there's very little difference between these basses, which is perhaps not surprising given the similarities of timbers, hardware and pickups. The sound quality was also remarkably consistent between all the Brubakers I tried – another reassuring indicator of consistent quality and materials.

CONCLUSION

Both of these basses are a bit of a bargain. Some instruments at this price point can be all mouth and no trousers: they look great but are definitely made down to a price. Not so with this pair. The range of usable sounds available from both these basses is way beyond what I would have expected, given their price. The sustain is incredible, no doubt due to that innovative neck-to-body join, but credit must also go to the high quality of the timber, electronics and hardware.



Sometimes, whether by luck or design, a bass just feels right. That's how it is with these Brubakers, and both are thoroughly recommended. Of the two, the singlecut five is the one I'd be most tempted with. It's not that much more expensive than the four and, although it's a bit heavier, it looks as if it should be three times the price on the label. It sounds that way too.

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SANDBERG
Basic Ken Taylor 20th Anniversary 5

CONTACT DETAILS

Manchester Bass Lounge
www.manchesterbasslounge.com

JOEL GRAHAM GETS HIS HANDS ON A BASS THAT, DESPITE THE LABEL, OFFERS ANYTHING BUT THE BASICS IN TONE, APPEARANCE AND PLAYABILITY

Twenty years ago, German luthiers Sandberg teamed up with Ken Taylor to produce a 'basic' signature model, and the Basic has been Sandberg's flagship model since its inception due to its very broad range of tones. Two decades later, I get my hands on a 2013 Limited Edition 20th Anniversary five-string model of the aforementioned bass. How does this update of such a popular studio instrument compare to the original – and what can this chunky handmade bass do?

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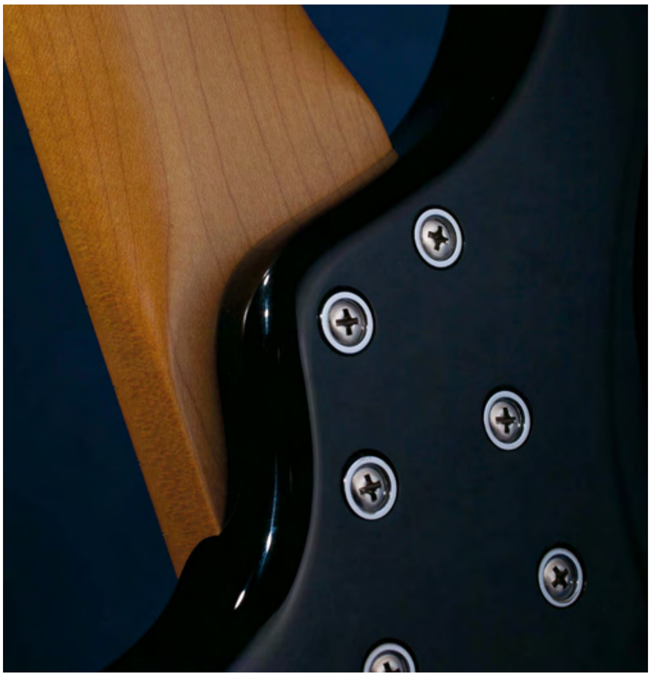


BUILD QUALITY

My initial reaction to the 20th Anniversary Ken Taylor was 'It looks heavy!' due to the thickness of the materials – it really looks like a back-breaker. Its solid look even persuaded me into doing a few stretches prior to picking it up. To my surprise, however, this bass is actually a lightweight: there is no excessive weight to it at all. Phew – that's an osteopath's bill avoided.

The body wood is alder, with a stunning black lacquer finish, and the six-bolt neck and fingerboard are both natural finished maple. With a 34" scale and 24 unmarked frets, the bass is topped off with Sandberg's signature headstock with chrome tuners. The neck and body really complement each other, with a pearled pickguard that is cut tastefully and snugly alongside five EQ and volume controls, making them look like miniature icebergs atop a mercury lake. The matching chrome bridge finishes the body off perfectly. There seems to be more gloss, and dare I say it, 'bling' compared to the original, but it's all very tastefully pulled off, and nothing is unnecessary.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Plugging the bass into an amp with a flat EQ, and adjusting the pots here and there, it soon becomes very clear why the Sandberg KT Basic has been a frequent visitor to studios over the world. Its tonal variety is vast, and when the right sound is locked in, there is no classic bass that this Sandberg can't seem to imitate. Selecting the passive setting and tweaking the tone pots, the bass kicked out an almost identically punchy tone to that of the classic P-Bass. A further turn on the treble pot and a switch of the single coil switch got as close to a Stingray tone I have ever heard on a bass that is not a Stingray… obviously. Further adjustments and switching between active and passive modes covers so much tonal ground that it's hard not to sit and pluck the E string repeatedly for hours – just in amazement of what the pickups and tone pots can do.

The fifth string of this bass is not lost either: the low B is really cutting and doesn't lose tonal clarity as other five-strings often do. Output remains constant when playing runs from the upper strings to the lower notes. In fact, the tones match the overall look of the bass – chunky!

The neck is really smooth and has a fairly flat radius: there is no problem here with over-thickness of the neck to accommodate the fifth string. Four-string players will have no problems at all walking their left hands up and down and dropping in lower notes. Slapping and popping is easy: there are no limitations to where you are forced to play. From the base of the neck to the bridge, everything feels comfy. The only restriction I could find is the amount of power you can utilise on the Sandberg: it's not an instrument to be heavy-handed with. It can sound clunky, with a fair bit of string rattle, as soon as any aggressive style of playing is introduced. Metal players take note.

If you're a delicate groover, however, there is nothing at all you won't find satisfying in playing this instrument. Its fat tones, ease of playing and all-round versatility tick all the boxes of what is needed in a five-string instrument of this quality.

CONCLUSION

If I could name an environment where the Sandberg KT 20th Anniversary Basic would be perfectly suited, it would be in the recording studio. Its tonal variety and crystal-clear tones will put the even most cynical studio engineer at ease. That is not, however, intended to take away any potential this bass has in the live environment: it's a bass that you'll need to get to know prior to the gig, or a few wasted moments could be spent correcting and changing its vast array of tones during soundcheck. Overall, the Sandberg KT Basic is a great bass, and who can fault Sandberg celebrating that fact with this 20th Anniversary edition? ■

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

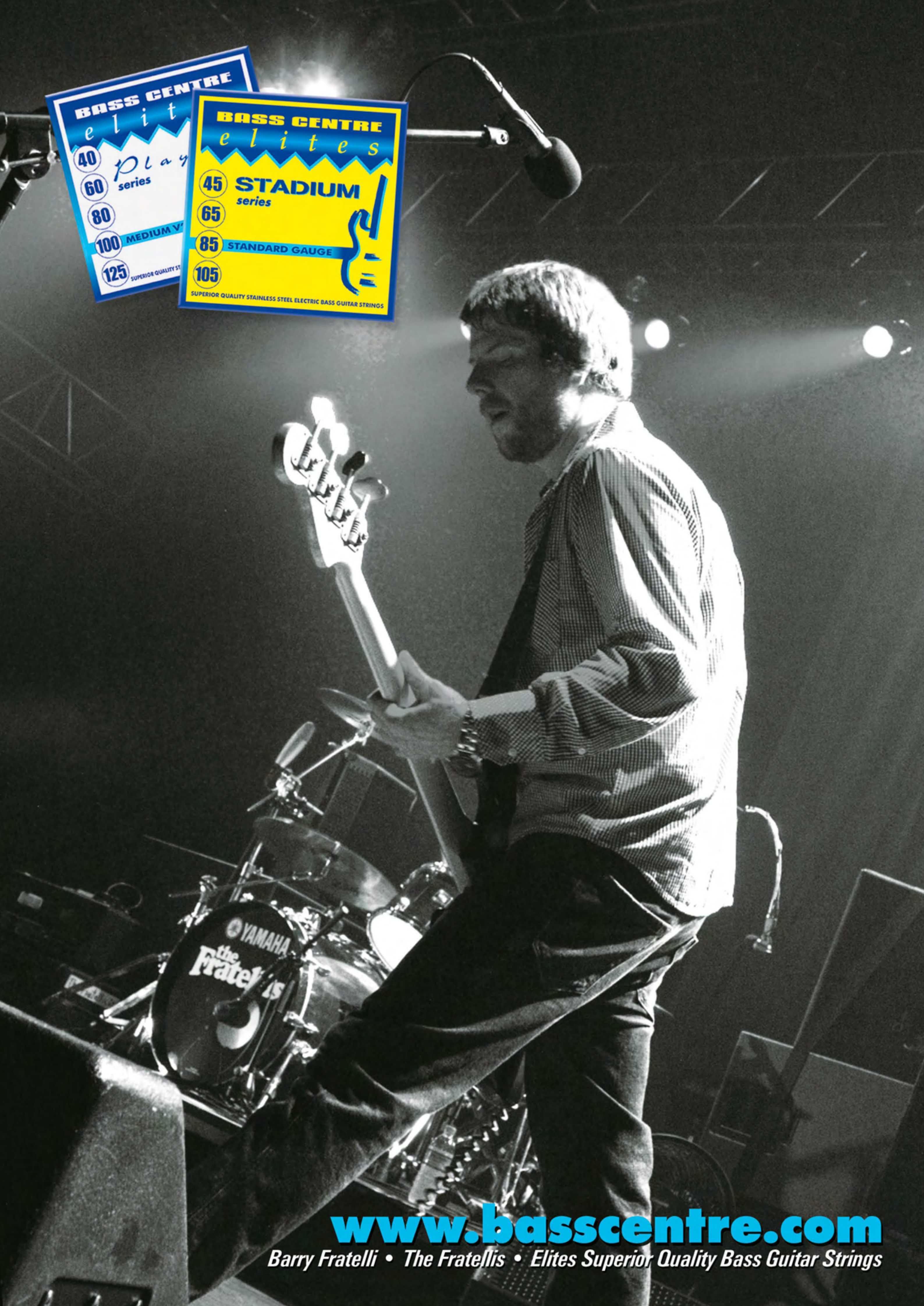
SANDBERG BASIC KEN TAYLOR 20TH ANNIVERSARY 5
PRICE | £1329
BODY | Alder
NECK | Maple
FRETBOARD | Maple
COLOUR | Black
FRETS | 24
PICKUPS | 2 x Sandberg Power Humbuckers
CONTROLS | 3 volume, pickup pan, 3 EQ and coil tap switch

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Ridiculous amount of tonal variety. Take two basses into the studio? Not when owning one of these you won't
MINUS | Not for the heavy handed. Overenthusiastic right-handers need to look elsewhere
OVERALL | A great, versatile five-stringer that carries a fair price tag for a handmade instrument

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★★☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★☆☆☆



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CARVIN
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WHITE, CREAM AND MAPLE. AS WELL AS MIKE BROOKS'S FAVOURITE CHOCOLATE FOR ELEVENSES, IT'S A RATHER FETCHING FIVE-STRING FROM THE CARVIN STABLE

Those clever people at Carvin are now producing some seriously fetching instruments. Not that they weren't producing great basses before, but there has been a real shift over the past year or two in their desire to cater for every bassist – and in doing so, every part of a bass can be customised to the player's exact specification. What makes this even more enticing is that their pricing is very reasonable for a custom instrument. So what makes this curvaceous five-string stand out?

BUILD QUALITY

Initial impressions are very good indeed. From picking the instrument up, there is no denying that this is a very well put-together bass, and it feels familiar, which is always a good sign. The slightly Warwick-like top horn catches the eye immediately, but have no concerns: it doesn't hinder the instruments playability or balance. The shape of the alder-timbered body has obvious Fender Jazz similarities, further hinted at by the cream Carvin J9A single coil pickups and chrome control plate.

The curves don't end at the body, with the headstock showing a sleek, streamlined profile that totally fits the general aesthetic. The chrome Carvin machineheads, with a 20:1 ratio in a 'four over one' arrangement, function very smoothly and chrome hardware has been used throughout (aside from two black battery covers) giving the instrument a slight retro feel. As a five-string, the 22-fret fingerboard is quite broad but Carvin have created a neck profile that sits in the player's hand very nicely: comfort and playability are certainly the name of the game. Despite having a nut width of 44.5mm, the shallow, satin-finished neck profile makes the nut width feel slimmer than it is, and the 19mm string spacing works very well in conjunction with the other elements to create a great five-string neck. The four-bolt join looks incredibly tight, which will be beneficial to the tonal clarity of the bass and the transfer of those low notes from the B string.

The white finish and matching headstock, pearloid pickguard, cream pickups and birdseye maple fingerboard with mother of pearl block inlays are a sumptuous combination, and this bass looks bold but classy with it. Contouring to the rear and a top body chamfer mean the bass sits very comfortably whether on a strap or with the player sitting down, and the balance in both situations is great: no weight issues here. Having said that, the bass isn't a lightweight, but it feels reassuringly sturdy and well up to the job.

The Carvin bridge is a solid unit with locking screws for each saddle to improve sustain and clarity, and both through-body and standard bridge stringing are possible, along with adjustments for action and intonation – although not for string spacing, unfortunately. All four of the inline controls (volume [push/pull for active/passive operation], volume, passive tone and stacked treble/bass) feel solid in operation and, for an extra touch of bling, come fitted with pearl caps.

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

Giving the bass an acoustic try-out, it sounds lively without being brittle or overly bright, and the low B string is tight and punchy, which bodes well for its electric performance. The neck highlights

CONTACT DETAILS

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

PROMENADE MUSIC

01524 410 202
www.promenademusic.co.uk

4 String Basses

11818 - Breedlove BJ350/SMe4 Electro Acoustic
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
10108 - Cort A4 4 String Bass Guitar, Natural
9558 - Epiphone Jack Casady Bass Guitar Black
12626 - Epiphone Jack Casady Bass, Metallic Gold
7233 - Epiphone Viola, Vintage Sunburst

Fender

10166 - Fender 75 Jazz Bass in Natural
4219 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz, Sunburst
9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
9231 - Fender Am Standard Jazz Bass, Sunburst
12763 - Fender FSR Deluxe Precision Bass, SFG
12288 - Fender Mike Dirnt Road Worn Precision SB
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
11001 - Fender Nate Mendel P Bass, C.A.R
9367 - Fender Select Jazz Bass, Amber Burst
12426 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass Brown Sunburst
12717 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Midnight Wine
9909 - Fender Standard P Bass, Lake Placid Blue
12895 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
12894 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
12805 - G&L Tribute L2000 Lefty 4 String Bass
10997 - G&L Tribute SB2 4-String, Metallic Black

Gibson

9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
12722 - Gibson Les Paul Bass, Heritage Cherry S/B
10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrotone Bass, Burgundy
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
12218 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass Guitar in Blue
12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst

LEVIN

4999 - Levin LB100J, Antique Sunburst
6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst

LODESTONE

8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8075 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Green
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black

MUSICMAN

4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8250 - Musicman Sterling 4 String Bass, Blue
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
10962 - Overwater Inspiration 4, Blue Burst
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
10102 - Overwater J Series Deluxe 4, Natural
7890 - Rickenbacker 4003, Jetglo
13012 - Rickenbacker 4003, Walnut
11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red

STEINBERGER

4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
9428 - Tobias Toby Standard IV Bass Guitar, White
10968 - Vintage V4MRSSB ICON, Sunset Sunburst
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
6963 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
12898 - Yamaha TRBX174 4 String Bass

5 String Basses

10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
12415 - Cort B5 20th Anniversary Model Swamp Ash
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
11014 - Fender Jazz Bass 5 String
11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String In Walnut
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
12294 - Marleaux Consat Custom Bolt On 5 String
12198 - MusicMan Stingray 5 Honeyburst
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
12561 - Peavey Millenium BXP 5-String Bass
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
12896 - Yamaha BB1025 5 String Bass Guitar
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
8023 - Yamaha TRB1005J 5 String, Caramel Brown
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses

4783 - Breedlove Atlas Stage BJ350/CR4
8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
12318 - Ortega D Walker Red Acoustic Bass
12351 - Ortega D Walker White Short Scale
12320 - Ortega D3C5 5 String Bass
10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
12307 - Tanglewood DB TAB Acoustic Bass
12361 - Tanglewood Odyssey TMO B2
13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar
12292 - Westfield PJB380 Acoustic Bass Natural

Electric Upright Basses

4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
12660 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

6445 - Westcoast BG5 Fretless, Natural

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)

Ashdown Engineering

4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
5066 - Ashdown 550 Touring Hybrid (550W, 2x10)
6759 - Ashdown ABM C115 500 Evo 3(575w,1x15)
11192 - Ashdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3
6459 - Ashdown ABM C210T-500 EVO 3, 575W
12259 - Ashdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
12258 - Ashdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10
11193 - Ashdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100 Combo
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Combo
8722 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Evo III Bass
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
8750 - Ashdown Perfect Ten 40 Bass Combo
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Combo
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo

Fender

4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo

Hartke®

10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin(300W,1x15)
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W, 1x15W)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo

Marshall

5433 - Marshall MB4210 (450W, 2x10)
5658 - Marshall MB4410 (450W, 4x10)
6769 - Marshall MB60 (60W, 1x12)
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Amp Combo
8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Amp Combo
11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo

Roland

6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X(120w, 1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)
4599 - TC Electronic BG500 115 500W, 1x15

Bass Heads

4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
11229 - Ashdown CTM15 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
10938 - Ashdown MIBASS 2.0 640w Small Head
9056 - Ashdown Mag300H Evo2 Bass Amp Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
7975 - Ashdown MiBass 550 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
9349 - Hartke HA2500 Bass Head
9027 - Hartke Kilo 1000 Bass Head
12382 - Hartke LH1000 Bass Head
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Momark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Head
5652 - Marshall MB450H 450W
6618 - Marshall VBA400 Valve 400W
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
5242 - Orange TB1000 1000W Terror
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets

8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6147 - Ashdown Klystron NEO 210 Secondhand
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrive 410 Bass Cab
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
6767 - Marshall VBC412 (4x12)
6617 - Marshall VBC810 (8x10)
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
5239 - Orange SP212 Smart Power Isobaric (2x12)
5238 - Orange SP410 Smart Power Isobaric (4x10)
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)
5182 - TC Electronic RS210 (2x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

just what a good job Carvin has done: this is one of the most playable five-string basses I have had the opportunity to play for some time. The neck dimensions, balance and overall feel are quite something and with the set-up as it is, I doubt many players would find anything to quibble about.

Plugging in, all the good acoustic points are magnified, this is truly a 'plug and play' bass: you could be handed this bass cold at a gig, having never touched it before, and feel instantly at home playing it. Carvin should be applauded for getting all the components spot on, as this is one bass you will never have to fight to play. In fact, running through the tonal options really illustrates what a flexible workhorse this could be for any player.

It's no one-trick pony either, as the electronics package shows. The single coil pickups matched with this Carvin circuit give the player a beefy Jazz-style delivery in passive mode: adjusting the volume of each pickup pinpoints the characteristics you would expect of each unit. The neck pickup has a sweetly rounded bottom end that simply works without being boomy or flappy: soloing the bridge pickup highlights the tight mid-range honk you would expect, while mixing in different levels from each pickup creates plenty of tonal combinations. Throwing the passive tone control into the mix gives the bass some throaty growl that can certainly be useful from time to time.

Switching to active mode really shows what this bass is all about, and without boosting either EQ band, the bass has a great sound straight off the bat. Boosting the EQ and working with different settings illustrates just what a versatile instrument this is: a bass for all occasions. The low B string's performance certainly benefits from being in active mode: across every string, the tone and volume level is consistent and punchy, but if punch isn't to your liking, you can take a fair degree of that out of the sound using the EQ and tone control.

With so many Jazz variations out there, it is difficult to come up with new ways to explain a bass's performance, if it subscribes to this particular set-up and layout, but it has to be said that the SB5000 puts in a stellar performance when it comes to covering familiar tones. It also has a few surprises courtesy of the circuitry, as its tonal capability extends some way beyond sounding just like another Jazz clone. Reggae and dub players will love the fat, ballsy tones, especially from the neck pickup: likewise, Jazz players will appreciate this modern update on a familiar sound, with plenty of top-end sparkle if you want it, and a solid natural midrange with plenty of harmonic overtones.

CONCLUSIONS

Carvin have truly come up with the goods with this bass, and if all examples from this range exhibit similar levels of craftsmanship, playability and tonal flexibility, they have a winning formula on their hands. At £1300, when you consider what you are getting and what you can specify if you choose to go down the custom route, there is no getting away from the fact that this is great value for money and on a par with similar spec-ed basses costing significantly more. Add in the cost of the free hard case and the deal looks even sweeter.

Looking at the Carvin website, the list of available options is quite extensive (note: prices vary according to spec) so their ability to cater for most tastes is certainly confirmed. Get out and try one, it might just be the best bass buying decision you make.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £1300
COLOUR | White
BODY | Alder
NECK | Maple
FINGERBOARD | Rosewood
PICKUPS | Carvin J9A single-coil pickups x 2
ELECTRONICS | 18-volt active/passive, two-band EQ
CONTROLS | Volume, volume, passive tone control (push/pull EQ bypass), bass/treble boost/cut (stacked)
TUNERS | Carvin premium tuners, Schaller-style
BRIDGE | Carvin bridge, two-way adjustable, through-bridge and through-body stringing
MADE | USA
NUT WIDTH | 44.5mm
NECK JOIN | Bolt-on, four bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 34" (864mm)
FRETS | 22
WEIGHT | 4.35kg (9lbs 6oz)
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED | Hard case
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A superb bass for the price, plenty of extra options to make it stand out from the crowd. A quality instrument with plenty of 'boom' for its buck
MINUS | The styling might put some people off but listen to the tone!
OVERALL | A seriously good bass at a not unreasonable price. Try, buy, enjoy!

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY ✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪
SOUND QUALITY ✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪
VALUE ✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪✪

HEADWAY
EDM-1 and EDB-2 Preamps

HAS DAVID ETHERIDGE FOUND THE PERFECT ACOUSTIC BASS SOUND?

When you move out of the comfort zone of all acoustic classical music and into the twilight zone of sound reinforcement for folk, jazz and just about any other musical idiom, double bassists can experience problems galore in getting a half decent sound.

Mics can produce good results or an awful row depending on the understanding (or the lack thereof) of the sound engineer involved.

I've been rendered inaudible on stage at the Cambridge Folk Festival in past years by guys who were stumped by the whole concept of miking a double bass! Even transducers can be problematic on occasion: that pickup you've clamped to the bridge can provide level, but may be noisy, or produce hum or even feedback. The bassist in my jazz orchestra regularly (and unwittingly) does Lemmy impersonations as her double bass pickup feeds back at inopportune moments.

Obviously I'm exaggerating with worst case scenarios, but even now, double bass players can have a lengthy search for the Holy Grail of a great, clean and natural double bass sound, whether live or in the studio.

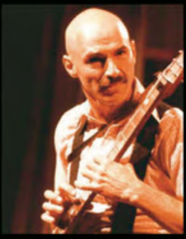
For many players a proper preamp is the answer for a natural sound that truly captures all the nuances of your instrument, provides EQ control, feedback rejection, able to handle a wide variety of pickups and impedances, and double as a DI box for recording purposes.

If this is your requirement, Headway Music Audio are the folks with the products for you. They have many years' experience in acoustic pickup and amplification technology, and have found that their products have been taken to the collective heart of upright bass players looking for great sounds with ease. In fact Headway claim that of their highly regarded EDB-1's total sales figures, half of them have been to double bass players.

This month, we'll look at two of their preamps, the EDM-1 and EDB-2, the latter of which is the successor to the EDB-1. Both units do essentially the same thing, although the EDB-2 operates at a much higher level and spec. Either way, you're in for a terrific and trouble-free time working with these products.

FEATURES

Let's look at the EDM-1 first. This can be battery or adapter powered (both units even come with a belt clip for moving around on stage), can handle passive, active and powered pickups (9v phantom power is offered at the input jack to ring or tip), while the output jack is totally flexible. Headway even include a stereo jack/XLR adaptor for balanced DI outs and also the facility to power the EDM-1 from 48v phantom power from a mixing desk. In addition to a well-chosen three-band EQ (10k, 590 and 120Hz +/-12dB), there's a Mute switch, Earth Lift, Anti



"With the Radial JDI, my bass comes through extremely clean, very quiet, and with a smooth transparent low end. I use my JDI for everything."

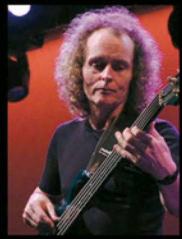
~Tony Levin
(Peter Gabriel, King Crimson, Paul Simon, John Lennon)

"When it comes to choosing a DI, I don't want to know the box is there. It has to translate my playing without it feeling compressed or limited in any way. The Radial JDV delivers my bass the way I want to hear it."

~Victor Wooten
(The Flecktones, Bass Extremes)

"The Radial BigShot MIX blends in distortion so I don't lose my bass tone. It works great!"

~Billy Sheehan
(Mr. Big, Steve Vai, 5-time winner: Guitar Player magazine 'best rock bassist')



"Love at first sound... The Radial JDI produces a clean, transparent, bass tone with plenty of punch. I use it for all my recordings and live shows and always get great results. It is the Rosetta Stone of DI's. Thank you Radial."

~Mark Egan
(Pat Metheny, Joan Osborne, Sting, Marianne Faithfull)

"Whether I'm performing live or in the studio, I rely on my Radial JDI for my sound and it delivers every time! I never leave home without my JDI!"

~Nathan East
(Eric Clapton, Toni Braxton, Lionel Richie, Phil Collins)

"Radial has made it simple for us musicians who don't necessarily want to be 'on-the-gig programmers'. Whether I'm in the studio or playing live, I'm never without my Bassbone!"

~Will Lee
(Billy Joel, Donald Fagen, George Benson, Letterman, Dave Matthews, Spyro Gyra)

"The Radial Bassbone gives me 2 channels so I can use my electric and acoustic basses with only one channel on my amp, and the clean, built-in DI sounds consistently great!"

~John Patitucci
(Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Bon Jovi)

"I've been using the Radial J48 direct box for years and I am convinced it is the best featured and best sounding DI available today."

~Ric Fierabracci
(Chick Corea, Billy Cobham, Andy Summers/Sting, Shakira)

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Five reasons bass players love Radial...

1 JDI™ passive DI
"Vintage vibe personified"
Hit it hard and the Radial JDI smoothes out the transient edge to deliver a natural smooth tone reminiscent of the glory days. Ideal for active bass, samplers and synthesizers.

2 JDV™ class-A direct box
"All the tone, no hype"
The Radial JDV's unique feed-forward class-A circuit design delivers purity beyond compare. The ultimate DI box for upright, electric bass, acoustic bass and more.

3 J48™ active phantom DI
"The go anywhere DI"
The J48 outperforms all other phantom powered DI's with lower harmonic distortion, greater phase accuracy and warm even order harmonics. Perfect for bass, electric and acoustic guitar.

4 Bassbone™ preamp and DI
"It's all about control"
Two inputs and two channels with a powerful EQ that gives you complete control of the tone to your amp, PA mixer or recording setup. Featuring a built-in Radial DI, power booster, effects loop and tuner out. Cool!

5 BigShot MIX™ effects mixer
"Maximum tone retention"
The MIX is a unique device that lets you mix in effects like you do on a mixing console, without messing with your tone. Perfect for bass players that want to add a touch of distortion or chorus without killing off the bottom end!

Radial® engineering
...power tools for power players℠
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Feedback Range (HPF) control with pre-set values for different instruments.

The EDB-2 is the big brother, with mouth-watering spec. Two separate channels, one with phantom power, the other doubling as a stereo jack input: there's a channel 2 mic XLR socket with three-way impedance switching; Mute, Earth lift, Phase reverse on either channel, a five-band EQ (10k, 2.8k, 880, 590 and 120Hz on either or both channels), Notch filter with Q and frequency, Range Filter (HPF) with settings for violin, guitar and bass; selectable input impedance, and a whopping +32db of input gain. There's also a new aux input for iPods and suchlike, and a mono mix jack output and separate XLR/DI output – although this one doesn't accept phantom power.

SOUND QUALITY

In use you immediately notice the cleanliness and quietness of the sound, which is hardly surprising given the quality of the electronics involved. If there are any problems, one control or another here will solve it effortlessly. The EDM-1 provides warm and natural tones; the HPF and Earth lift take care of the usual problems you may encounter on a gig or session. The EQ is well chosen and very authentic; if you use this with a budget upright bass, some experimentation will easily get an improvement on the basic acoustic sound that can make your instrument come alive and disguise any shortcomings. In combination with an amp or mixer's EQ, the sound contouring can be very impressive indeed.

The EDB-2 is the real deal for more creative work, with its twin channels, which open up a whole range of possibilities when using both pickups and mics on your instrument at the same time. The five-band EQ really delivers creative results: just for fun I put my active fretless six-string through it. The EQ on the EDB is superior to the active EQ on my bass, and used together you can get very distinctive and creative results. This provides tone and character to any bass, and using the phase reverse, notch filtering and the other goodies offered solves most, if not all, potential problems.

Standing waves, boominess, feedback and harshness can all be eliminated easily, and most importantly for gigging musos, you can easily set up your sound to suit any venue's acoustics. Again, trying my fretless through it, I was able to completely knock out pickup hum due to dodgy shielding on my instrument's electronics.

The only drawback I could find (and this is a very subjective opinion) is that the output jack is in mono. I can see that you might want to keep the two channels separate for recording purposes, although for most people this will be irrelevant. That said, the twin channel nature of the EDB-2 is very flexible and allows for separate EQs on mic and pickup channels, plus individual monitoring and FOH mixing on live gigs. On chatting to Headway about this, they explained that they've added the iPod input for backing tracks and singer-songwriters. The size of both units is specifically designed to fit into a guitar (or in this case, bass) case, so you'll never forget it on gigs. In use, Headway advise feeding the output of either unit into the FX return of an amp, as stacking input stages and preamps can create unwanted noise. As always, experimentation is the key.

CONCLUSION

There's no doubt that Headway have put a tremendous amount of time and thought into the design and features of both units, and have come up with preamps that provide all you might want in terms of quality, performance and reliability. With their solid and substantial construction, they provide classy, quiet, clean and musical results in abundance. For me, the flagship EDB-2 is the one that offers perhaps more in creative terms and nuances both live and in the studio. However, that's not to write off the EDM-1: this unassuming little box effectively and quietly produces the goods without fuss or bother. Either will do the job, and guarantee many fans and adherents in years to come.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

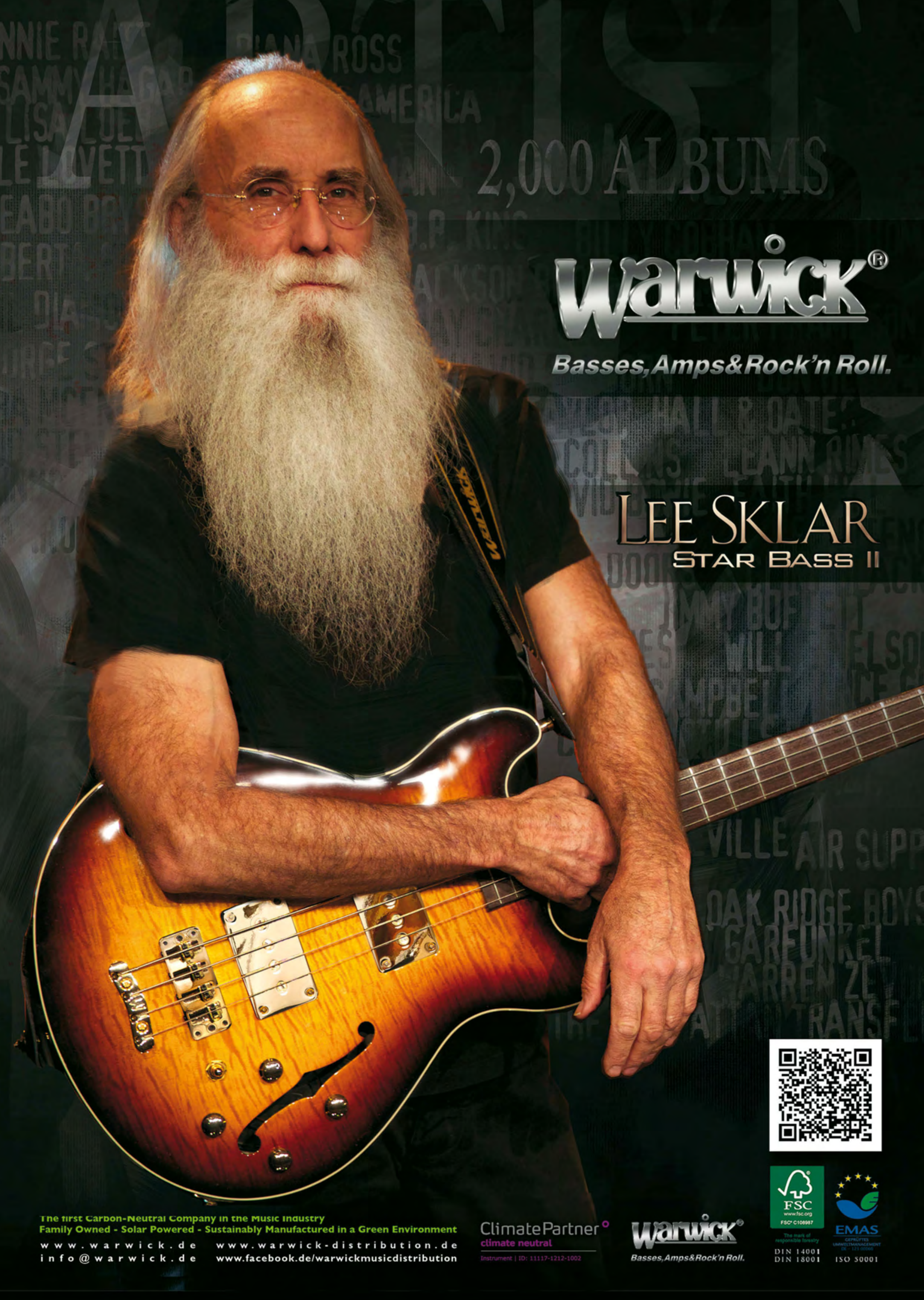
MADE IN | U.K.
CONTROLS | Power on/off/standby. Mute switch. Notch filter -12dB Notch; Q = bandwidth; Freq = centre frequency of cut; chan 1, chan 2 or Off. 5 band EQ Treble 10kHz +/- 13dB; Pres 2.8kHz +/-7dB; H.mid 880Hz +/- 12dB; L. Mid 590Hz +/- 13dB; Bass 120Hz +/- 12dB; As above @ 45Hz +/-16db. Assign EQ Ch.1, Ch.2 or both. Input gain 0db-+32dB Ch1 & Ch.2 Battery LED. Input Impedance +hi and Hi: passive pickups Active/low for Powered or Low impedance pickups. Ch1 & Ch.2. Phase Reverse. Earth/Ground Lift. Range filter(HPF) Violin @ 192Hz, Guitar @ 85Hz, Bass @ 41Hz. XLR switch/mic in.
INPUTS | Channel 1, Phantom power to Ch.1 jack switch. Channel 2 mono/stereo, Ch.2. Mic/XLR in, Aux/Ipod input. 18v AC adaptor. Belt clip.
OUTPUT | Line out DI/XLR, mono mix line out.
WEIGHT | 550g (1lb 4oz)
DIMENSIONS | 5.5"L x 3.7" W x 1.5" D Depth including knobs: 1.7"

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Incredible flexibility in classy units that show how much thought has gone into their design and features
MINUS | To be really picky, I would have preferred the option of a stereo out on the EDB-2 to make the most of combination inputs when recording. Apart from that, they're ideal
OVERALL | Just about all you need for acoustic instrument use

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE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Chris has amassed a staggering amount of insightful, interesting and sometimes irrelevant information on bass guitar equipment during his career as a professional bassist. So we continue to push electronics and bass amps under his nose and make him report to us on his favourites.

CHRIS HANBY @CHanbyEFX

DOD FX32 MEATBOX

CHRIS GETS A BUTCHER'S HOOK AT THE DOD FX32 MEATBOX

If there is one thing we bassists like, it's having more bass: the deeper, lower and fatter the better. Octave pedals have long been the way to add some girth to your sound, but in the mid 80s DOD created a diamond in the rough that most of us totally overlooked. Their FX32 Meatbox quietly sat on the shelves of many music shops waiting for us to come and appreciate it. Many years later we are rediscovering it, and now it's attracting a fanatical cult following.

HISTORY

DOD stands for David Oreste Di Francesco, who (alongside business partner John Johnson) founded the company in 1974. With Di Francesco as designer and engineer, DOD soon found favour among musicians for their well conceived, great sounding pedals such as the Overdrive preamp 250, Phasor 201 and Envelope Filter 440.

A new colleague, Jason Lamb, began to work for DOD in 1987. Initially testing and repairing pedals, he soon became their main hardware engineer and designer. He was responsible for not only the Meatbox, but a whole host of other DOD classics, each with an innovative sound and graphics: the BuzzBox, Gonkulator, Grind, Juice Box, Deep Freeze, Death Metal, Punkifier, Bass Grunge and Vibrothang among them, to name but a few. The Meatbox won an award for most innovative accessory in the late 80s, but despite this the pedal was not a big seller and so disappeared into relative obscurity.

The company was sold to Harman Music Group in 1990 and by the late 90s became what we now know as Digitech. Under the Digitech name many of the DOD favourites are still in production. The DOD name has recently been revived and they are now offering limited run reissues of the original Overdrive Preamp 250 and Phasor 201.

IN USE

The Meatbox looks fantastic, like a lump of steak complete with fat and gristle ready for the pan, showing that DOD has a sense of humour. The original packaging included a sheet of four fly stickers to attach on your pedal to add to the raw meat motif. The names of the control functions are equally comedic; Meat (blend between dry and sub harmonic), Rump (boost/cut of 35Hz), Flank (boost/cut of 60Hz centre frequency), Lbs (output level). By blending your clean bass signal with the fixed 35Hz low frequency of the Meatbox, you enter the realms of chest-bursting fatness and gritty, super low-end subs. Most of the time you won't be getting the full benefit of what this pedal has to offer, as you need a concert hall PA to even hear some of the low frequencies it pumps out. Plugging it into your amp will get you some of the way there, but the Meatbox has a reputation as a cone popper, so beware!

AVAILABILITY

The Meatbox was discontinued in 1997, but it appears quite regularly on eBay and the forums. It is now considered a vintage collectable, so don't expect to get one for peanuts. In good condition with box, instructions and stickers you won't get much change from £200.

ALTERNATIVES

The closest thing to an original Meatbox is the Mantic Beefbag at $299, but they are made in very limited runs. DBX offers the 120A Subharmonic Synthesizer at around £200 new. It's a 1u rackmount, but delivers a similar heft to the low end.

CONCLUSION

This pedal will not be for everyone: I have spoken to many players who found the Meatbox a bizarre curio. That said, if you want to fatten your sound up, or seriously hurt your audience, then the Meatbox fills this unique niche. It's an interesting and innovative unit and can be used to great effect in the right setting. And trust me, plug this pedal into a large PA with decent subs and you'll have no trouble finding the elusive brown note!

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THE FRONT LINE

WANT TO MAKE IT AS A PRO BASSIST? HELL YES YOU DO! TAKE SOME ADVICE FROM FOUR BASS PLAYERS AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME...

THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Jazz guru Ruth takes a spin in a new (and funky) band

I just finished doing a 10-day tour with a band called Let Spin, who have a larger feature elsewhere in this issue of *BGM*. It's a relatively new band, and we have just released our first album. There are a lot of influences because all four members write music for it, so obviously all the compositions can be quite different, but throughout the whole set there is a strong emphasis on improvisation, as we all come from a jazz background. I really feel, like with open, freely-improvised sections, our music gets better the more we play together. Also, the more you know each other, the more you like each other, the more you become friends and find common ground. With this band we don't play a lot, because our drummer lives in Berlin and we are all busy doing various things, but it was a great experience doing 10 gigs in a row. It felt as if during the first two or three gigs we were reminding ourselves of the music and the written bits of the tunes, but after that we really started to play. We memorised all the written parts, and that made a huge difference too. We didn't have to look at the score any more, and we could concentrate on what we played. If you have an free, improvised section in almost every tune, it can sometimes happen that you fall into the same place every time and find it hard to come up with something new, especially on stage. Sometimes we would panic and not let the music flow, or allow it time for something to happen naturally. Everybody would play at the same time and then it would go nowhere. However, because we were also travelling together, and staying in the same places, we had a lot of time to discuss and think what did and didn't work. We talked about being more aware of when to play and when not to play. The most important thing, though, is that we started trusting each other more and more, which is a big part of improvised music. As a bass player it can be strange to drop out for a while and let different textures emerge, but sometimes the best thing is simply to let someone else take charge.

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

THE METALHEAD

PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium's bassist checks in from his current world tour

Having had a full day of wine, beer, a bit of grappa, and some fine food at a winery on the outskirts of Cape Town, I am feeling a bit loose as I write this – so forgive me if I sound more like I'm on vacation than on tour. At the moment, we're finishing up the first part of our world tour, snaking our way around England and Europe, flying to Australia and now South Africa. We have definitely had our fair share of culture and climate shock. This column is going to be a bit different today: maybe it's the booze or jetlag, but I want to share some insight into this leg of our tour – what it's like to jet between time zones, play shows, spend days off living large, and our day (or night) jobs doing our best to entertain those that have ultimately footed the bill for all of this madness.

The trip started in Germany for a bit of pre-production and rehearsal. Even though we rehearsed before heading to Europe, we needed to fine-tune the set and make sure all of our gear, previously stored in Germany, was working properly. When you get to the point where you are coming overseas for shows more then once an album, it becomes logical to store a duplicate set to avoid large shipping bills. Bigger bands than Trivium sometimes have even more duplicate rigs that they ship around the world for this reason.

England was our first stop on the tour – a mere five shows, which is weird for us – but all super big and super important. Joining us were our co-headline partners Killswitch Engage, Miss May I, and Battlecross. This was a whirlwind, to be honest. The shows were unbelievable, not only selling out, but with a great energy and vibe throughout the entire set. KSE and Trivium both broke out at roughly the same point, them slightly ahead of us, so to share the stage with a band I truly admire and have been proud to call friends was a true honour. It's easy to view a co-headline gig as a competition, but when every single band brings their A-game to the table, the real winner is the audience. I am pretty confident in saying that this was the case. More next month!

www.trivium.org

© Scott Uchida

THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike checks in from the mixing desk

© www.ashleybird.com

The past 10 days have been an intensive blur of rehearsing and pre-production for the new album. The song count went from nine, to 12, and now to 18! That's a lot of arranging, tweaking and sounding out new ideas. It always intrigues me how other musicians communicate: obviously there's a fair bit of improv in some genres, but when you're playing tight, song-based riff-rock like us, the arrangement is key. Once we have the various parts locked in we can work on variations and dynamics within the song framework. Anyway, here are a few things that I've found have really helped us at these rehearsals.

Communication is key, so don't just crank up your amp and blast away. We like plenty of eye contact and always let the drummer count the song in, even if it's a bass or guitar intro. This saves time on multiple false starts! Also make sure each player has a vocal mic set-up: that way, when inspiration (or disaster) strikes, everyone has a voice.

Another thing we do once the song has been arranged is to play the song quiet, strip it back, with no distortion or full-on drums. You'll hear far easier and more clearly any clashing notes or rhythms, and it will help the vocal part to breathe. A good thing is also to learn the song instrumentally: without the vocal to play off, it's amazing how much tighter and punchier your playing will be. Bass-wise, our drummer and I always try to get a few run-throughs on our own so we can be sure we know all the pushes and stops. Try and drop the song a few notches tempo-wise: playing even slightly too fast can pull the weight and power right out of a tune.

One final thing to keep in mind is the concept of reflected glory: if the record is great and sounds great, then everyone's a winner. If you want to artificially force your stamp on it, you're not a team player and you should probably look at a solo career or a project where yes-men can realise your delusions. Obviously we're still a few weeks away from tracking the album, but it's a great feeling knowing how prepared and solid we are at this early stage.

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Ten-string certified mad person Stu recalls his tour of NAMM

At the recent NAMM show I had variations on the same conversation with several people with differing perspectives, and I thought the topic might be of interest to my extended range sisters and brothers. There is no easy way to sum it up, but it comes down to context and syntax. What is the instrument we play?

While I had my 10-string on hand, there were others there with 12, 18 and even 24-string basses. Each of us has a different style and a different vocabulary and chases a different ghost. The beauty of bass, for me, has always been that it's such a comparatively young instrument. This means that it does not have the same long history as other string instruments and is fresh because of that. When Monk Montgomery turned the electric into a genuinely melodic instrument; when Larry Graham first slapped; when Stanley Clarke and Jaco Pastorius launched us into the stellar realms of soloing; and when Victor Wooten all but single-handedly flipped everything on its ear with his completely unique and accessible approach, the electric bass and its community of builders and players have done in less than 100 years what has occurred over centuries for other instruments. They made the electric bass an accepted part of the mainstream.

Each of these steps was met with resistance, but that is how change happens. With each string added to the bass, it has been called a novelty… until someone has found a way to make a viable musical statement. So here is what I would ask you to think about until you next read my words: if we are playing the newest incarnation of an instrument which has been reinvented repeatedly in so short a time, how is it to be defined? If you are playing in a band and can cover so much sonic territory, are you truly the bass player? If you are a solo artist, do you even need a name for your instrument? I am not writing in hopes of building toward some great truth, so much as I am hoping that it will make you think about what it is you do. And these are questions you may well be asked. Everyone who has pushed boundaries in his or her field has received criticism and had to defend a position.

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BASS TECHNIQUES

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

Jack Stevens graduated from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts in 2005 and has gone on to play bass with the likes of Craig David, Simon Webbe and Mick Hucknall.
www.jackstevensbass.com

JACK STEVENS BEGINNER'S THEORY

72

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES

74

Alex Webster founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and has guested since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the Extreme Metal Bass instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY

76

Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES

78

Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com

FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY

82

Say hello to our new advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...

PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES

84

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS

86

Kev Sanders is a freelance electric and double bassist. As well as numerous BBC radio and television sessions, he's played over 4,000 live gigs. He is the head of Bass Studies at AMS.
www.kevsanders.com

KEVIN SANDERS SOUND LIKE YOUR HEROES

88

JACK STEVENS

JACK EXPLORES THE WILD WORLD OF TIME SIGNATURES . . .

Figure 1

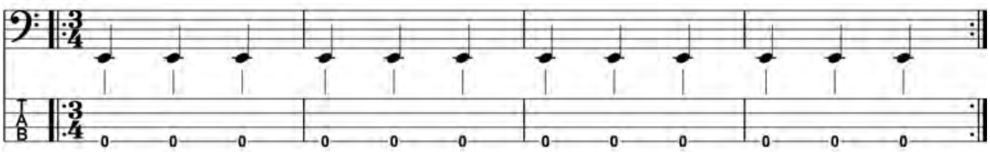


Figure 2

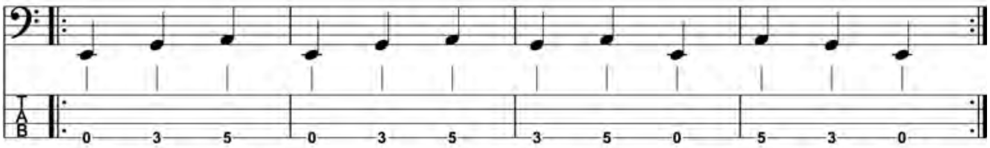


Figure 3

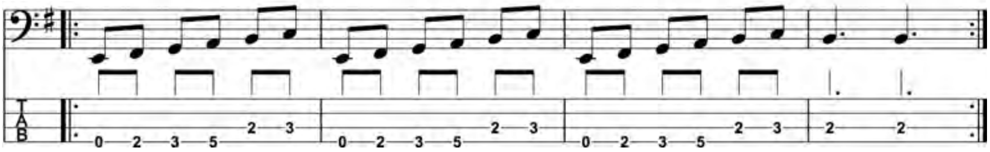
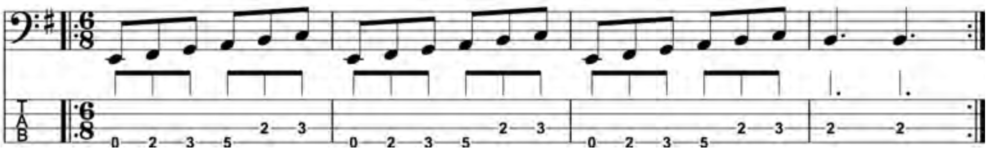


Figure 4



Right at the end of last month's column, I threw in a curveball: the 2/4 bar! This was purely because 'Baggy Trousers', the song we were discussing at the time, contains this particular length of bar. Having a variation in bar length within a song can add a different type of feel to a musical passage or idea. The four in 2/4 refers to the type of beat we're counting (in this case it's crotchets), and the two refers to the amount of crotchets per bar. 2/4 as a time signature is a very common feature of the musical march – think military snares and soldiers stamping!

We can also change the bottom number in a time signature, so you are also likely to see these time signatures: 6/8 and 12/8. In this instance the eight refers to quavers or eighth notes. For 12/8, think of a slow blues shuffle.

Let's have a look at some song examples with time signatures other than 4/4.

'Say A Little Prayer' – Aretha Franklin
The verse has clearly got a couple of extra beats towards the end of each round. Try counting along in groups of four to see what I mean.

'Delilah' – Tom Jones
A story told in a fast 3/4 meter.

'At Last' – Etta James
So sultry. So 12/8!

'God Save The Queen'
Need I say more? 3/4.

'Theme From Mission Impossible'
This utilises a 5/4 time signature.

'Money' – Pink Floyd
This classic bass-line is in 7/4.

'Times Like These' – Foo Fighters
Another example of a 7/4 time signature in use. Count through the intro at the point where the drums come in.

'Solsbury Hill' – Peter Gabriel
A beautiful song with a very natural-feeling use of 7/4.

The first set of exercises explore the time signature of 3/4. *Figure one* is really for you just to try counting along in three, followed by an example of an actual bassline in 3/4 in *figure two*. *Figure three* plays around with a quaver idea, still in the same time signature, but in the key of E minor. Take note of the dotted crotchets at the end of the passage, which equate to three quavers played as one whole note.

The difference between 3/4 and 6/8 can often be confusing to non-musicians and beginner music theorists as they both contain the same number of quavers (six). I was once told by a music teacher to think of 3/4 as a waltz and to think of 6/8 as having a 'swaying' feel (from left to right and back and forth). Really, it comes down to where the accents fall within each time signature. Take a look at figures three and four. The first is a bass-line in 3/4, which would be counted so that the accent was on the first quaver of each crotchet: '1, and, 2, and, 3, and'. 6/8 places the accents on the first and fourth quavers, so you get: '1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6'. Notice the difference?

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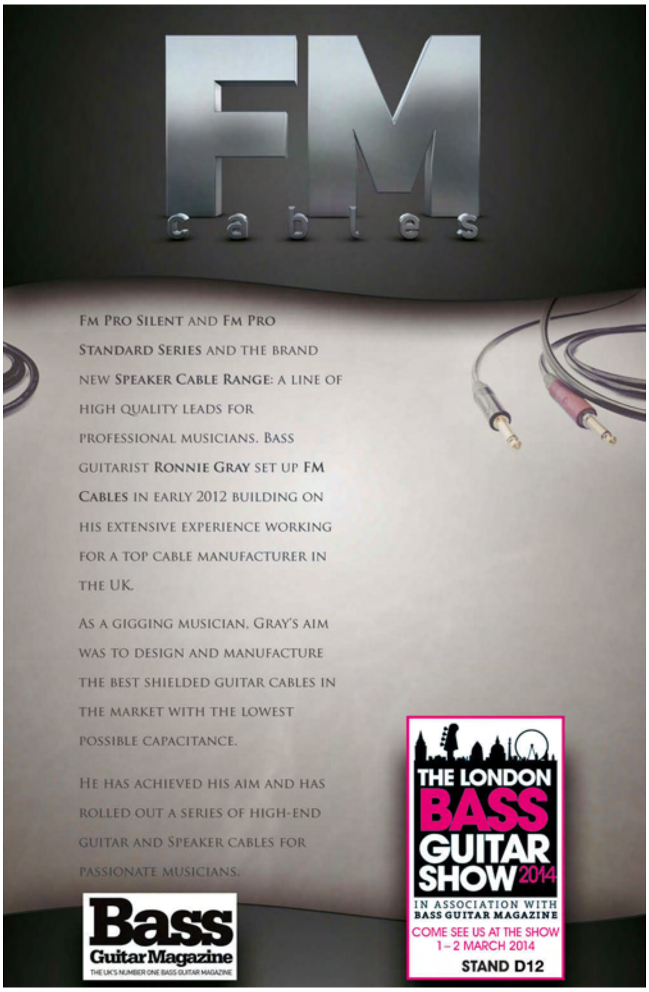
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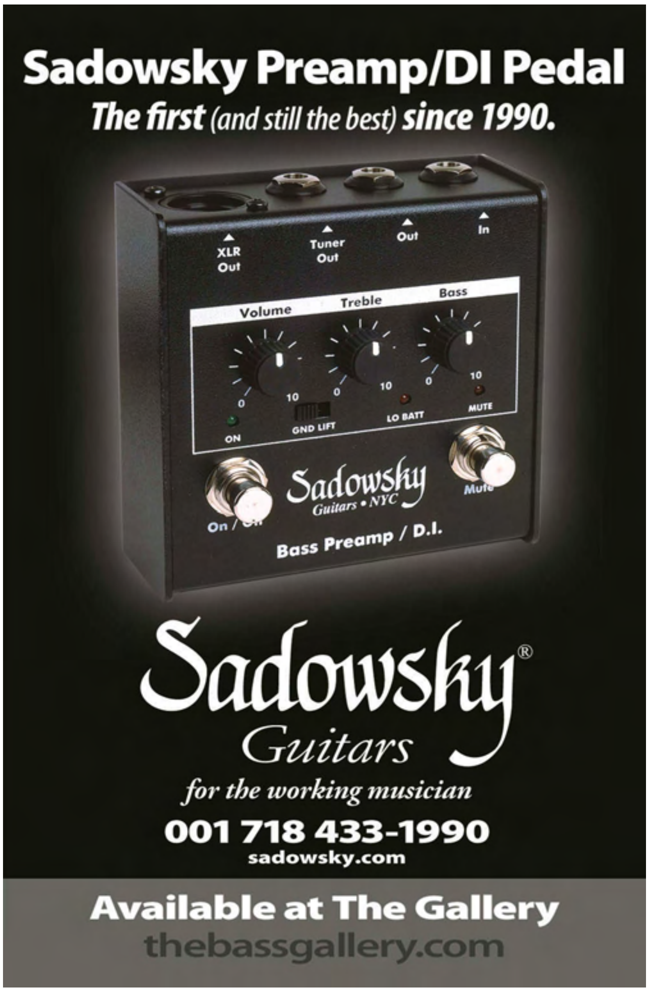
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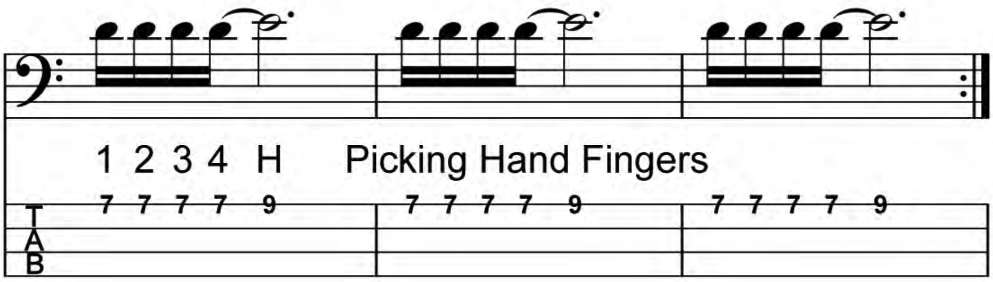
PAUL GEARY

THE GEARY-MEISTER INTRODUCES STRUMMING. NO, HE HASN'T BECOME AN ACOUSTIC TROUBADOUR...

This month I would like to take a look at the mighty strum, which involves using each finger of your plucking hand to strike the strings in one fluid movement. The technique is based on the flamenco style of guitar playing, which when transferred onto bass makes for an exciting variation to the standard thumb pop technique.

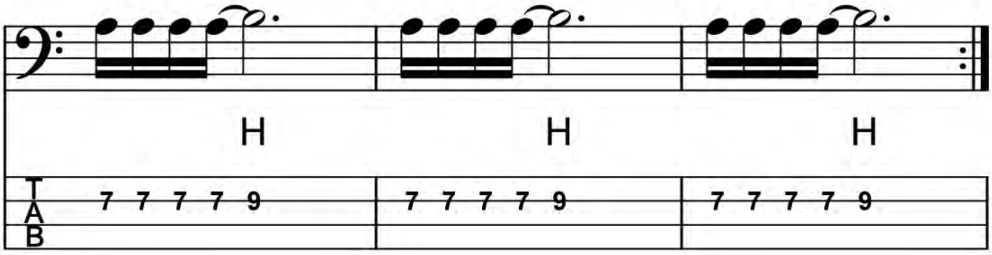
EXAMPLE 1

This exercise starts out on a high D, played on the G string at the 7th fret. The fourth note of the grouping of sixteenths is a hammer on to E (9th fret G string). Practise this one slowly, making sure you hit the first note hard with the first finger of the plucking hand. Then proceed to hit the same string with the second, third and fourth finger in succession. The fourth finger will need to hit the string hard in order to get a strong-sounding hammer on note at the 9th fret of the G string. Remember that the 1, 2, 3, 4 under the stave represents the plucking hand fingers.



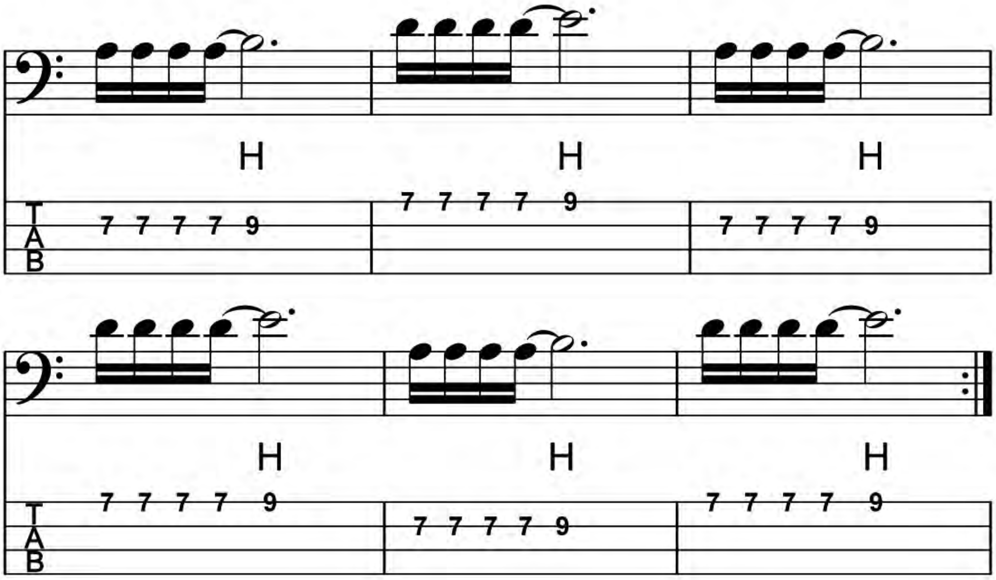
EXAMPLE 2

Make sure you are getting a nice metallic sound from the nail on your plucking-hand fingers as you strum the string. Follow the last example, this time transferring it onto the D string, playing the A note (7th fret, D string) Then hammer on as before onto the B note (9th fret, D string). Keep the first finger of your fretting hand firmly planted on the A note as you strum the strings.



EXAMPLE 3

This time, try switching between the D string and the G string, each time making sure you are getting a clean-sounding note on each string, followed by a strong hammer on. Practise at varying tempos, starting out slow at 70BPM and increasing as you become more confident with the technique.

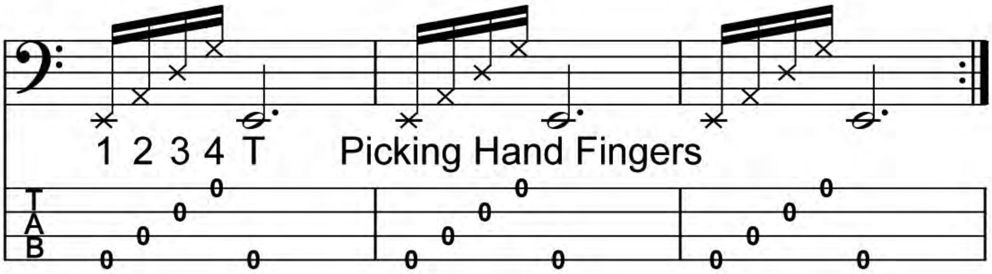


EXAMPLE 4

Let's try hitting each string with the plucking hand fingers, starting with the 1st finger on E, 2nd on A, 3rd on D and 4th on the G string in succession as before. Make sure you dampen the notes with your fretting hand to create a dead note. This will take time to master, but with a bit of practice I'm sure you will see rapid improvement.

After the strum, come down hard with the thumb of the plucking hand to get a solid-sounding open E. Remember to keep it consistent and flowing. Choose the right spot on the strings with your plucking hand: just before the first fret works best. This will give you good tone.

Next time we will look at putting this technique to work in some grooves. Until then, live long and prosper!



ALEX WEBSTER

ALEX SCALES THE RHYTHMIC PYRAMID AS A PRACTICE EXERCISE FOR BASS PLAYERS. GET CLIMBING!

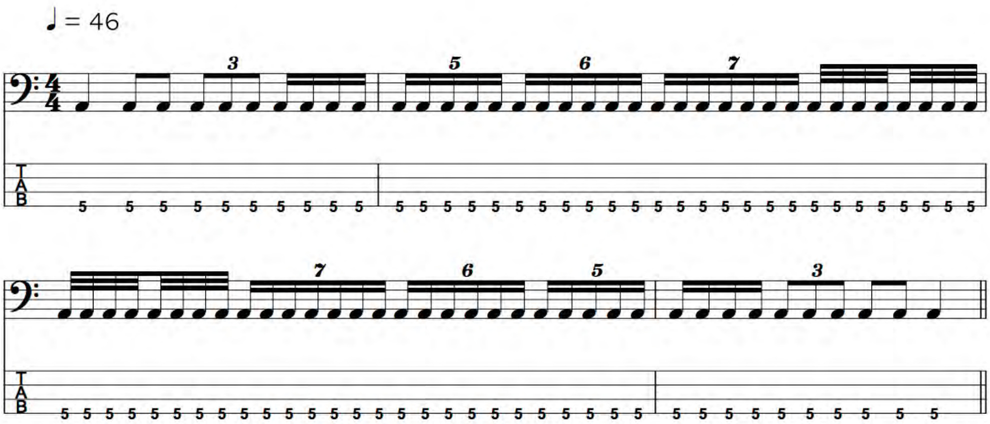
For the past few columns we've looked at various exercises designed to make scale practice more interesting. Keeping with that theme, this month we'll take one of my favourite rhythm exercises and look at how it can be applied to scales and scale-based arpeggios.

The exercise is inspired by a drum routine I learned from one of the best drummers and drum instructors in my home area of Tampa Bay, my friend Royse Bassham. He created something he called the 'pyramid of doom' as a double bass exercise, where each beat was divided into smaller and smaller subdivisions until it peaked at 32nd notes, and then returned down the same way it had come up, creating a pyramid of notes.

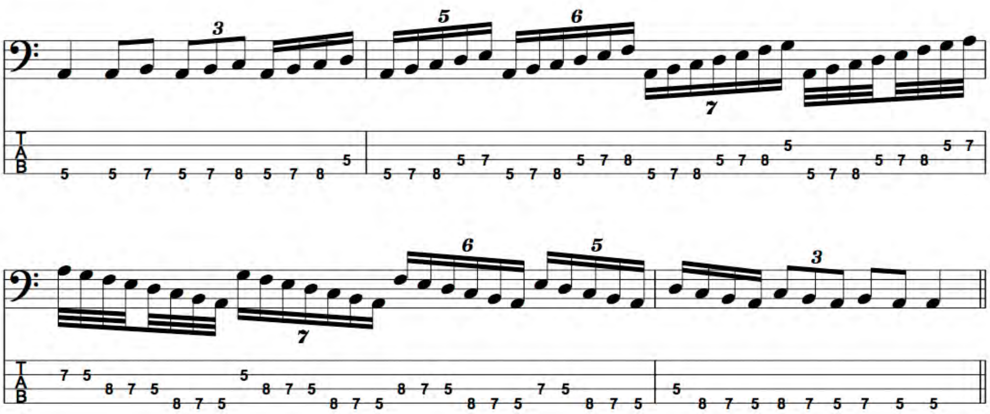
I thought it was an exercise that would be useful for just about any instrument. While the rhythm is not the kind of thing you'll find very often in real-world musical situations, I still think it's well worth learning.

It's a good exercise for your hands, it will help you get

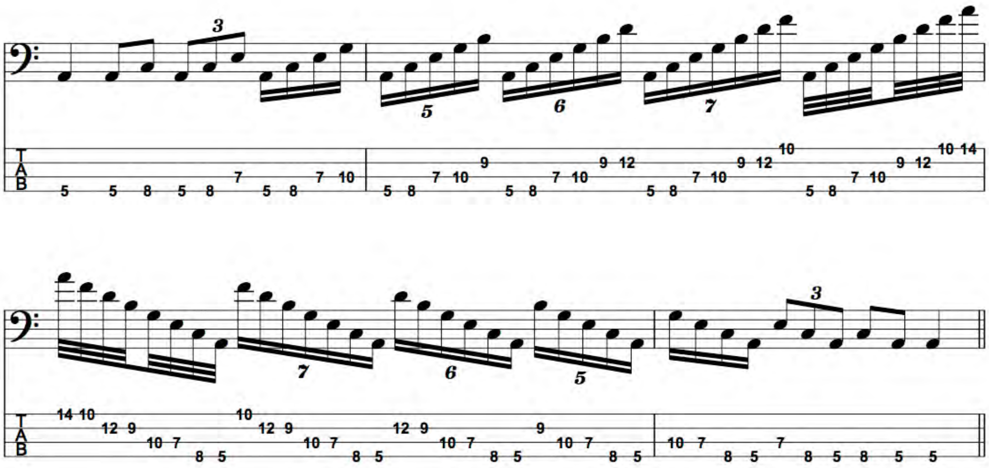
Example 1



Example 2



Example 3



Extending your tone life

accustomed to playing phrases with subdivision changes – and also, it's a lot of fun!

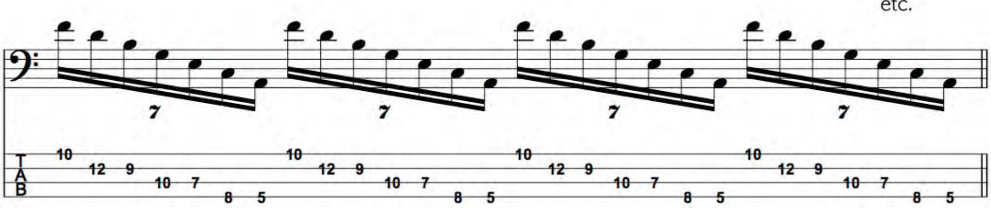
In *example one* we'll begin by working through the exercise's rhythm. Set your metronome at a very slow tempo. I like playing this at 46BPM, but go even slower if you need to. Make sure that your notes are played evenly: if you play this pattern correctly you'll create a feeling of speeding up while ascending and slowing down while descending.

In *example two* we'll add the notes of the A minor scale to the exercise, adding an additional note of the scale on each beat until reaching the octave. Then you'll simply return the same way you came up, gradually slowing down by playing one less note per beat.

Example three is a real handful, as it requires a few position shifts. You'll be working through the scale using arpeggios, by playing every other note of the scale as you ascend and descend: see my columns in *BGM* 98 to 100 for more on this subject. The rhythm is the same as the previous two exercises, but the fingering pattern is a quite a bit more difficult. Don't mess with this one until you've got the first two down! If you're having difficulty with the pattern, try practising your trouble spots in isolation. For example, if the descending septuplets are giving you a hard time, it would make sense to spend extra time on that phrase by playing it repeatedly: see *example four.*

With all of these examples, be sure to practise everything slowly and make sure your notes are always clean and even. Don't bump up the tempo until you can really play the patterns with precision. Once you have these patterns mastered, I think you'll really enjoy playing through them and hearing the speed-up/slow-down effect they create.

Example 3



"WHILE THE RHYTHM IS NOT THE KIND OF THING YOU'LL FIND VERY OFTEN IN REAL-WORLD MUSICAL SITUATIONS, IT'S WELL WORTH LEARNING"

ROB STATHAM

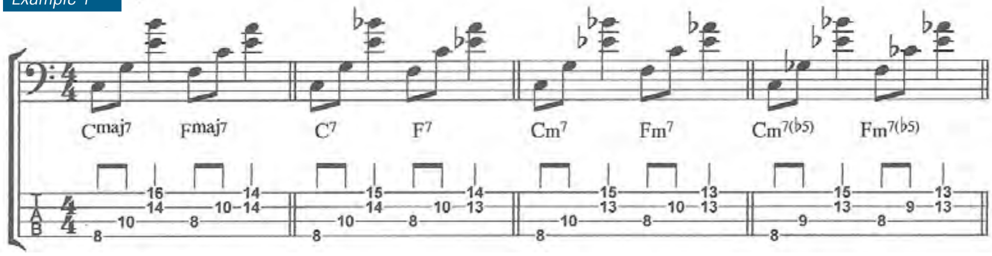
TAPPING? CHORDS? IT MUST BE CHORDAL TAPPING! PROF STATHAM TAKES US THERE

Following on from last month's column on tapping, I thought we might look at some chordal tapping possibilities. You may remember that the final example in my previous column involved double stops with our tapping hand: we can expand this idea to cover the most common seventh chord types with two voicings for each chord type. If that sounds familiar, that's because you may well know chord shapes that can be played on the bass that achieve the same result. Here, we're taking that idea and using a chordal tapping technique which provides another way of voicing these familiar chords.

Playing basic seventh chord shapes on the bass results – depending on which of the common two versions we use – in a chord consisting of either root, third, and seventh, or root, seventh, and tenth, which is the third an octave higher. This is already making use of what we term compound intervals (the notion of playing certain intervals in the chord in a higher octave) but chordal tapping enables us to take this a step further, beyond what would be physically possible with chord shapes. Indeed, the wider intervals mean we can play a simple bass-line with the fretting hand, with the third and seventh in the tapping hand.

The first example illustrates the eight voicings we'll look at, two each for major seven, dominant seven, minor seven, and minor seven flat five chords. You'll see that, as with the equivalent chord shapes, we can think of each chord having either a root on the E string or the A string. Notice, however, that this technique allows us to include the fifth of the chord as well as playing wider intervals. For instance, the first chord in the example, C major 7, has the root and fifth played with the fretting hand. Meanwhile, using our index and middle finger of the tapping hand, we play the third as the tenth, and the seventh as the fourteenth: this wouldn't be possible to play as a chord shape, at least on a four-string bass.

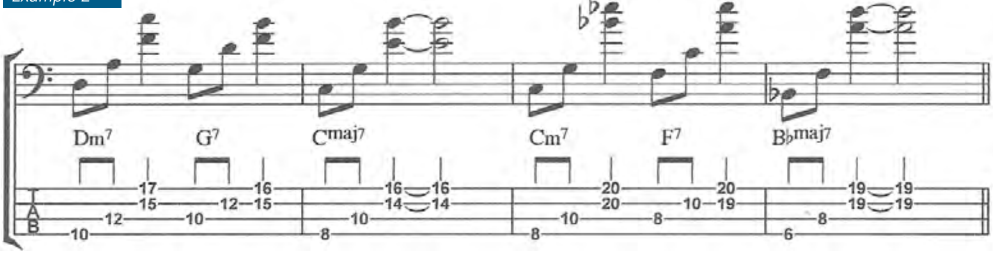
Example 1



Notice that this C major 7 chord shape requires us to tap an interval of a perfect fifth at the fourteenth and sixteenth frets on the D and G strings respectively. In fact, these patterns require us to tap three distinct intervals: a perfect fifth, a flattened fifth, and a perfect fourth. The second major 7 chord shape, for instance, requires us to tap a perfect fourth, the seventh and tenth of the chord. You will see that for the minor 7 flat five chord, the tapping hand plays the same shapes as for the minor 7 chords, the change being in the fretting hand where we play a tritone, the root and flattened fifth of the chord.

The second example demonstrates how these patterns might be used in a chord sequence, combining the different types of voicings. The chord sequence is a pattern of II-V-Is moving through the cycle of fourths. You will see that we play a II-V-I in the key of C, the I chord then becoming the II chord of the next II-V-I. The point to notice here is that for the first II-V-I I have used one set of voicings for the third and seventh of each chord, and for the second I have moved to a higher register and used the other set. In this way, this short chord sequence makes use of all the voicings for major 7, dominant 7, and minor 7 illustrated in the first example. So you will notice that the minor 7 chord in the first bar has the seventh on top, whereas the minor 7 chord in the third bar has the minor third on top. Notice also that this is a very wide voicing; the third of the chord is two octaves above where it would be in closed position – technically, a seventeenth!

Example 2



You will have noticed that the tapping hand patterns become the third and seventh of a particular chord, depending on the root; that is to say, a perfect fifth in the tapping hand could be either the major third and major seventh, or the minor third and minor seventh, depending on the bass note. Likewise, we might keep the same notes in the fretting hand and move the tapping hand by a semitone to create another chord.

I have illustrated this idea in the third example, a four-bar sequence using the chords E minor 7, Eb major 7, D minor 7, and D major 7. In the first two bars, the tapping hand remains the same,

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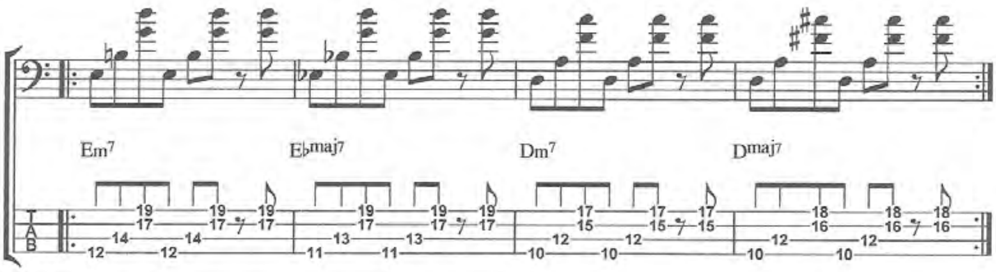
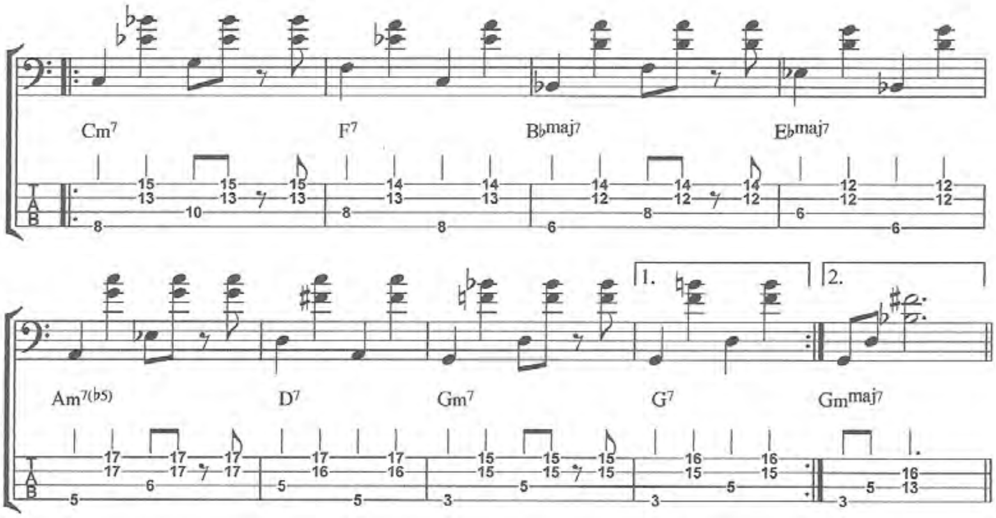
playing the third and seventh, while the fretting hand moves down a semitone, thus the minor third and minor seventh of the E chord become the major third and major seventh of the Eb chord. In the third and fourth bar, however, it is the fretting hand that remains the same whilst the tapping hand moves up a semitone to create the D major 7 chord. In this particular example we are using the situation where the tapping hand is playing a perfect fifth, but this concept can be used for all the other shapes. One you might like to try, which creates a new chord for us to add to our vocabulary, is to play a dominant 7 shape and then move the root and fifth up a semitone to create a minor 6 chord.

Example 3



As I mentioned earlier, these wide intervals with the third and the seventh in the upper register provide us with the opportunity to create a simultaneous bass-line and chord pattern which could be a useful accompanying option. The last example uses these chordal tapping possibilities to create an accompaniment for the first eight bars of a tune, using the chord sequence from 'Autumn Leaves'.

Example 4



As you can see, this example makes use of all four seventh chord types and so is a useful exercise to practice them all in context. A challenge would be to see how you might use some of the alternative voicings: for instance, by starting the first bar with the voicing for C minor 7 used in the third bar of the second example and continuing from there. Of course, many other voicings are possible for common chords using this technique, and I have included one such example in the final bar of this last example: it's a minor chord with a major seventh, requiring us to tap an augmented fifth.

There are many ways to use these and other shapes to create bass-line and chordal accompaniments, so experiment with these shapes and explore others, applying them to chord sequences you know for a fresh take on familiar material.

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FRANC O'SHEA

IT'S TIME TO GO SOLO! ADVANCED THEORY NINJA FRANC STEPS INTO THE SPOTLIGHT WITH A BRAND-NEW SERIES

The art of soloing is often misunderstood in the bass-playing arena. Since most playing situations require bassists to fulfil supportive or interactive roles, it can be quite rare for us to step forward and display our musical prowess to all and sundry. However, in some types of music it is almost a requirement that you have the ability to produce some sort of a solo, whether it's jazz, funk, progressive rock or metal, as well as other styles.

Solos come in many forms: from those that are improvised to those that are completely worked out, from the bass break to individual band members being featured as they are introduced at a concert. For my next few columns I will be focusing on different aspects of bass soloing: I'll hopefully provide many of you with food for thought and a framework within which you can develop your own ideas. To start with, I will be looking at how to solo over jazz standards.

It has been suggested by some teachers that you should just learn other players' solos, take segments from them and patch them together. One of the many problems with this approach is that it produces a conveyor belt of clones: I get really bored when I hear someone just churning out a load of Jaco Pastorius licks. Plagiarism is not only rife in literary spheres but also appears in the musical world: the question is, 'Where is your own voice?'

An interesting interview with Jaco by Neil Tesser from *Downbeat* magazine was published a few months after he had joined Weather Report. Here was an astute, fit, drug- and alcohol-free Jaco, who was in his prime. His seminal, eponymous solo album had not long been released, and he talked about his version of 'Donna Lee'.

Jaco mentioned that he had learned the melody but didn't work out Charlie Parker's actual solo as he thought that was too personal. This is thought-provoking, as it not only highlights the fact that Jaco didn't have any other electric bassists to copy at that time – at least when it came to soloing, because there was no one who could solo at the same level as him at the time – but also that he didn't want to copy any other player, whatever instrument they played. Consequently, he developed a unique voice. Of course Jaco was influenced by other musicians, but he didn't just imitate them – he used what he absorbed to stimulate his own creativity.

Of the great classical composers, many could improvise, but unfortunately over time this aspect has diminished and a great deal of modern classical musicians are lost without notation. If jazz musicians are not careful, the same art will become defunct for them too, as many players become compendiums of the ideas previously laid down by others. You can certainly learn a lot from studying the solos of others, but the real learning is to understand how what they are doing works musically, and to use that knowledge as a springboard for your own ideas. Don't just copy the ideas of others verbatim.

In his *Modern Electric Bass* video, when discussing the importance of mental development, Jaco talks about delivering the 'real deal' rather than 'just jiving… where people are just wiggling their fingers and know a couple of licks'. He talks about understanding your instrument and knowing how music works. The old adage 'knowledge is power' certainly rings true. This is the approach I will be using in an attempt to aid you in the development of your own voice.

Example 1

IΔ7	VI7(♭9)	II-7	V7(♭9)
	#Io7 IIIo7 Vo7 ♭VIIo7		IIo7 IVo7 ♭VIo7 VIIo7

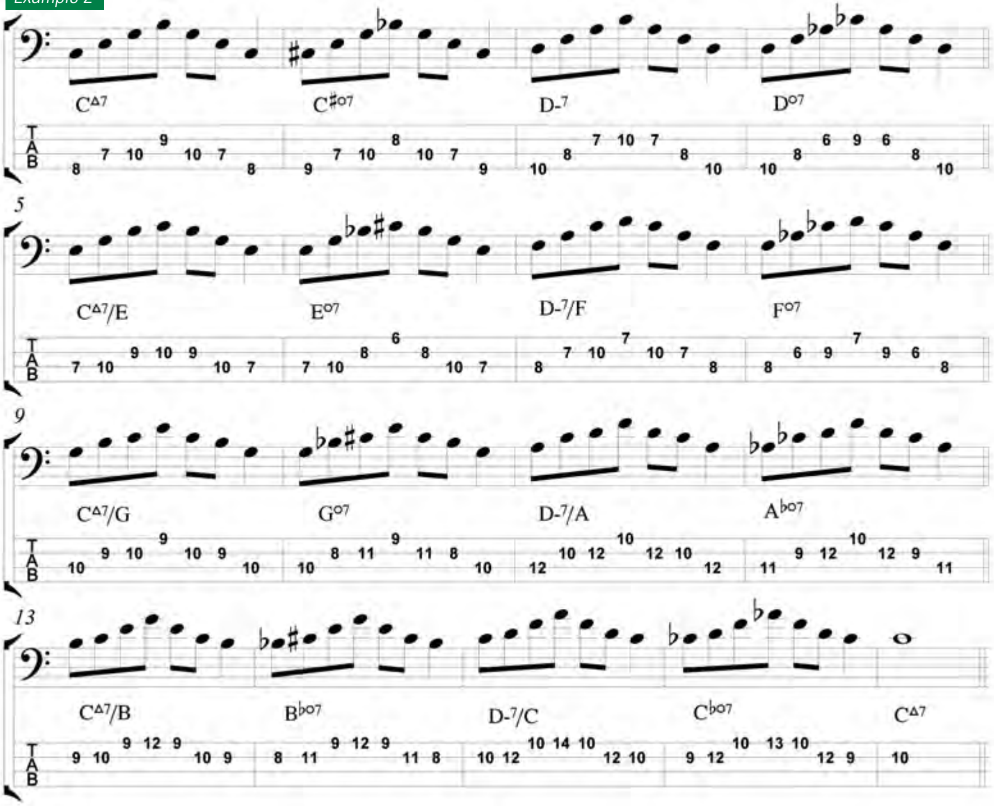
Example one demonstrates a common jazz chord progression that crops up in countless standards, not only as a turnaround, but also as a sequence in itself. Shown below the dominant 7th chords, which appear in bars two and four, are groups of four related diminished 7th chords that we will be using as substitutions for the dominant 7th chords. More about how these and other substitutions work can be found in my columns in *BGM* 53 and 54.

Example two demonstrates these chords in action as arpeggios. Although the sequence is repeated four times, all the inversions are shown, which creates not only a continuous ascending progression, but will also help you to fully understand its architecture. Although the tab indicates a certain fingering, you should explore all the possibilities. Also, you will note that all the diminished 7th chords are related but have separate names. For instance, it is inappropriate to call a Fdim7 chord Ddim7/F (ie a D diminished 7th chord in first inversion), because – along with the Abdim7 and Cbdim7 chords – they share the same notes. Since diminished 7th chords are built by stacking minor thirds, they are completely symmetrical.

The whole purpose of this exercise is demonstrated in *example three*, which shows you how to connect to the nearest chord tones available in the next bar from the chord tone you are on in the present bar. An arrow pointing up means that the next note will be above your present note, an arrow pointing down means the next note will be below your present note, and a horizontal arrow indicates that the chord tone you are currently on is a note that is part of the next chord as well. Understanding the architecture of this sequence in this way will help you to comprehend the possibilities of voice leading from one chord to another, and is a much sounder basis to aid in the building of a personal musical vocabulary than just copying a bunch of licks.

I will be building on these ideas in my next column as we see how they can further your development as an improvising soloist. Until then…

Example 2



Example 3

IΔ7	#Io7		II-7		IIo7		IΔ7
1→	↗1 ↘bb7	1→	↗1 ↘b7	1→	↗b3 →1 ↘bb7	1→	↗3 ↘1
3→	↗b5 →b3 ↘1	b3→	↗b3 ↘1	b3→	↗b5 →b3 ↘1	b3→	↗5 ↘3
5→	↗bb7 →b5 ↘b3	b5→	↗5 ↘b3	5→	↗bb7 ↘b5	b5→	↗7 ↘5
7→	↗1 ↘bb7	bb7→	↗b7 ↘5	b7→	↗1 ↘bb7	bb7→	↗1 →7 ↘5

PHIL MANN

ADVANCED TAPPING IS PHILIP MANN'S MIDDLE NAME! NOT LITERALLY – THAT WOULD BE WEIRD

Welcome to the next instalment of *BGM's* finger yoga and Pilates for bass! Firstly, may I kick off by saying a thank you to those of you who visited me during my Elixir Strings masterclass at this year's London Bass Guitar Show. It was lovely to meet so many *BGM*'ers for the first time, and long may our friendships continue.

Soppiness aside, this month's column comes to you direct from the delights of a Boeing 777 cabin at 38,000 feet, as I'm on my way out to lecture at the Players School of Music, Florida. Let's hope we don't get vertigo!

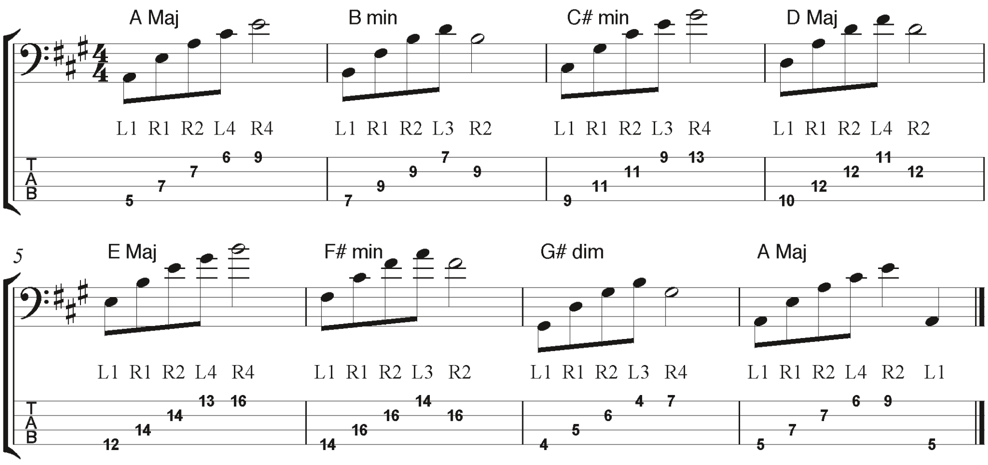
Let's begin by refreshing the subject areas covered in the last issue. Our main expansion of the tapping technique was the introduction of our little finger to our harmonisation exercises. Cunningly, the last implication that we encountered was also an introduction to the focus of this month's work.

Our last study enabled us to double the third and fifth intervals up an octave and split the harmony between both left and right hands, creating a very vocal spread of notes across the breadth of the fretboard.

Let's rejuvenate this information now while developing the exercise and modulating it into the key of A major to reinforce our ability to move melodic and harmonic information from one key centre to another.

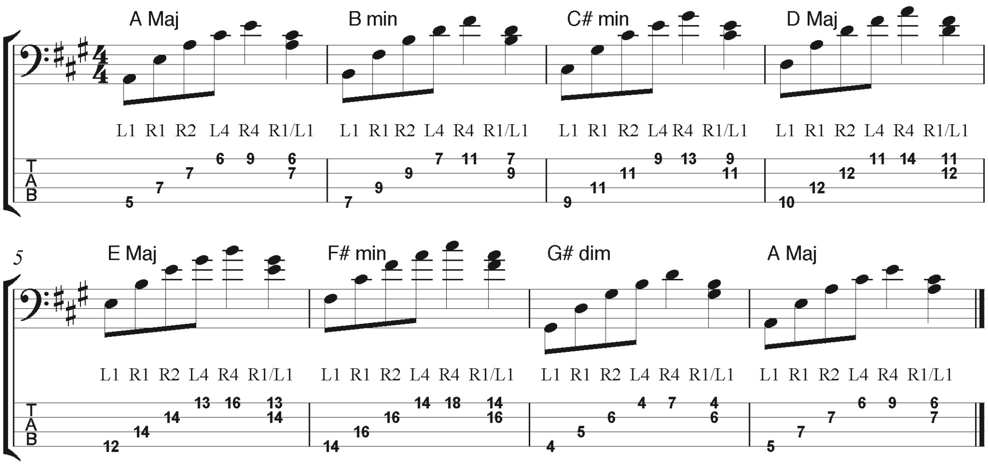
Example 1

This month's incarnation of our tapping programme will introduce some double stops to the equation. This technique is a handy one: double stops can be incredibly effective when applied fittingly, allowing us to voice chords well beyond the traditional limitations of our instruments. Let's start to unlock these musical benefits by examining *example two* and taking some steps in the right direction.



Example 2

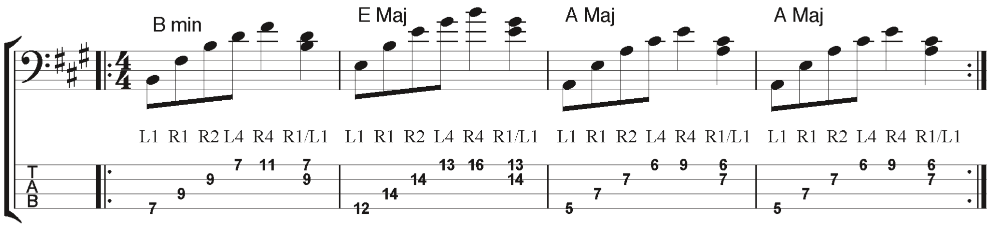
You should instantly recognise the theme that's been carried over from *example one*: however, for the first time we now encounter double stops. After executing the initial ascending line, the root is then performed simultaneously with the third, now up an octave, which creates an interval of a 10th.



Extending your tone life

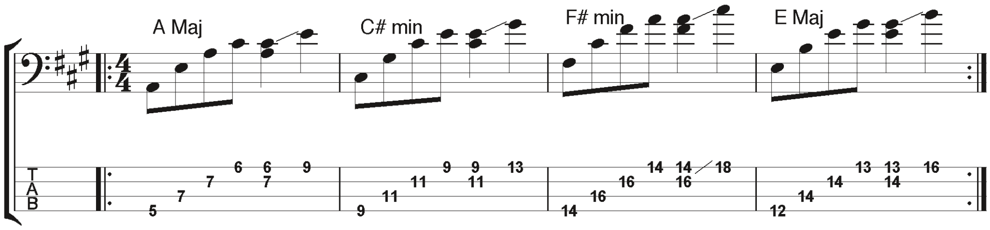
Example 3

This takes this month's principles and applies all of them over a simple II-V-I chord progression. As with *example two*, the following progression is in the key of A Major. Once you have the changes under your fingertips, I encourage you to attempt to modulate these patterns through all 12 key centres.



Example 4

Finally, have a look at the I-III-VI-V progression found in *example four*: there are a few new developments to contend with, which make the task more challenging to perform. Once you've ascended through the triad, the double stop is then played between the root and third intervals as usual. However, on each occasion the third is then slid up to the fifth. The phrase will require you to traverse the index finger in your left hand past the stationary index finger of your right hand without the two notes interfering with each other.



That's all for now: we'll pick up the trail in the next issue, so practise hard!

DAVID ETHERIDGE

DOUBLE BASS GURU DAVID ETHERIDGE SAYS 'IT'S TIME TO ACCESSORISE!'

You've got a great instrument and you're ready to go out into the world of playing. What do you need for the working upright bass player? I recently saw a posting on a bass discussion site that seemed to imply that you would need to carry around a large flight case full of all sorts of things. Happily you don't, but let's look at what you will need on the road, on stage, in clubs and on the concert platform.

First of all, a good, strong and above all protective case is paramount. By their very nature, upright basses can get clouted in the rigours of the gigging and touring musician. The cheaper case models will keep the rain off, but that's about all. Bash the instrument on a doorjamb, as I have inadvertently done in the past, and you could have your bridge collapse with chaotic results.

A good bass case will be both weatherproof and padded all over. The more comprehensive models have pockets and pouches for strings, dusters,

Extending your tone life

A decent case is essential to protect your beloved instrument's more vulnerable parts

"FIRST OF ALL, A GOOD, STRONG AND ABOVE ALL PROTECTIVE CASE IS PARAMOUNT. BY THEIR VERY NATURE, UPRIGHT BASSES CAN GET CLOUTED IN THE RIGOURS OF THE GIGGING AND TOURING MUSICIAN"

music, mutes, pickups and of course the bow. The more handles the cover has the better, particularly when loading and unloading your bass from the car. Some even have wheels mounted in the base of the case, which makes heaving it around very easy. For many years I used a leather case, with a looped strap: one end went around the bass neck, the other round the endpin mechanism at the bottom. Heave it on to your shoulder and away you went, although my chiropractor had to sort out back strain in later years...

If you're going on world tours, a hard case is essential to meet the demands of careless baggage handlers. One bassist of my acquaintance told me of the heart-stopping moment when he heard and felt his bass travel the length of a plane's cargo hold as the plane took off. The less said about the damage, the better...

Suitable cases for air travel can cost thousands, which may seem too much of a good thing. However, when you look at the spec for these, it gets quite impressive: air suspension, very thick padding and insulation, all wrapped up in a Kevlar case: these will stop bullets. Then add castors and wheels, lifting handles and you have the kind of thing that will protect symphony orchestra bass sections on tours around the world. If you can't afford to buy one, there are companies who have them for hire for tours. With basses in the classical world being hundreds of years old and worth in some cases over £100,000, protecting them is of paramount importance. Even for us mortals with basses only worth a few hundred pounds, damage can be heartbreaking and repairs from a top luthier expensive. Look after your bass with a good case and it will reward you with a lifetime's service.

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KEVIN SANDERS

KEV RAISES HIS HAT TO SOMETIME FREE BASSIST ANDY FRASER, INSPIRATION TO THE STARS

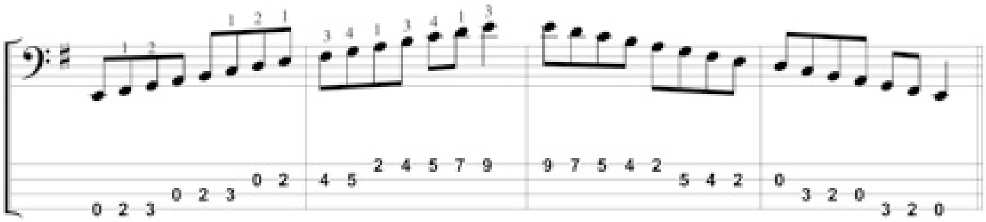
Born in 1952, Andy Fraser started out on piano, later moving to guitar in his early teens – but by the time he was 15, he'd switched to bass, been expelled from school for refusing to get his hair cut and, with the help of guitarist Alexis Korner, nailed his first pro gig with legendary British bluesman John Mayall. He was only with Mayall's Bluesbreakers for a matter of months, but by the time he'd left he'd already hooked up with guitarist Paul Kossoff and vocalist Paul Rogers to form one of the greatest rock bands of the era; Free.

Fraser and Rogers did much of the songwriting in Free, including the band's biggest hit, 'All Right Now'. After Free split in 1972, Fraser moved to California to concentrate on song writing, penning hits for artists such as Chaka Khan, Wilson Pickett, Robert Palmer and many others. Very much the rock bass player's rock bass player, Fraser had little enthusiasm for bass solos, believing that the job of bass is to lock with the kick drum and provide a solid foundation for the song. Having said that, he played one of the greatest and most influential bass solos ever in the Free song 'Mr Big': it certainly influenced Billy Sheehan, who named his band after the song.

Here are the scales which Fraser predominantly uses for the solo.

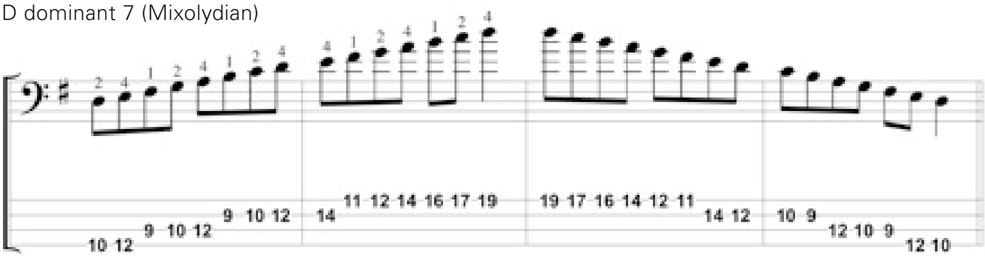
Example 1

E minor (Aolian)



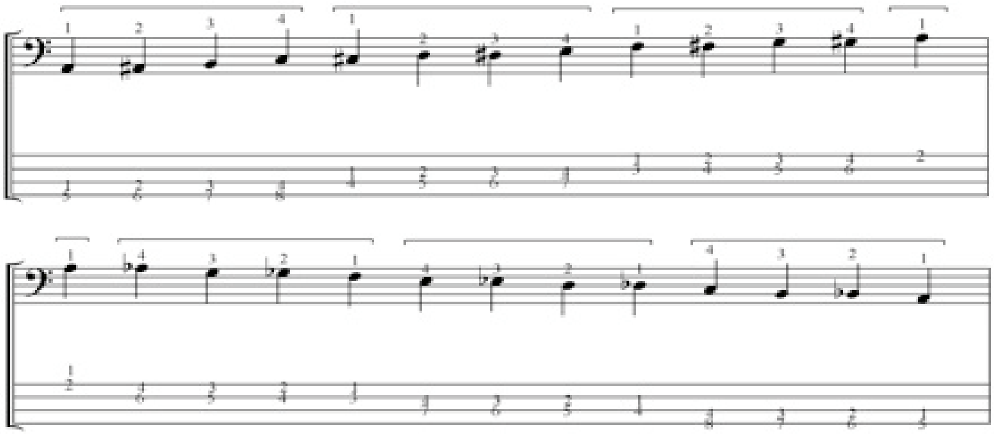
Example 2

D dominant 7 (Mixolydian)



The chromatic scale: to keep things easier to read, I've written out these scales melodically. This means using sharps only when ascending, and flats only when descending. Here's the scale written out in A.

Example 3

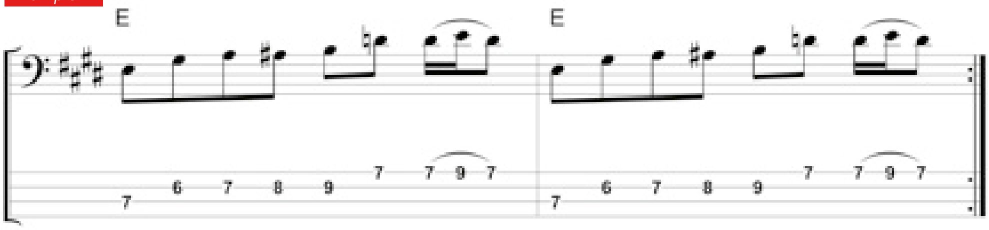


It's easiest to visualise the chromatic scale as a pattern on the fretboard, so that by learning the sequence and pattern of notes ascending and descending, you can cover any chromatic scale simply by starting from the tonic of any key. Starting and finishing from the A as shown, means you are playing the A chromatic scale, leave out the first three notes (ascending) and you'd be playing the C chromatic scale, and so on.

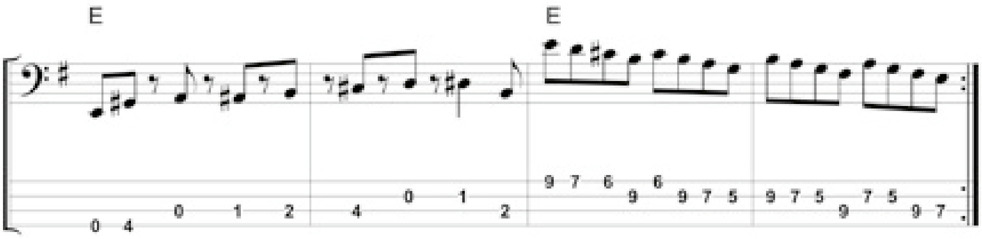
Extending your tone life

Now try these Fraser-style bass riffs which use the scales in *examples one* to *three*.

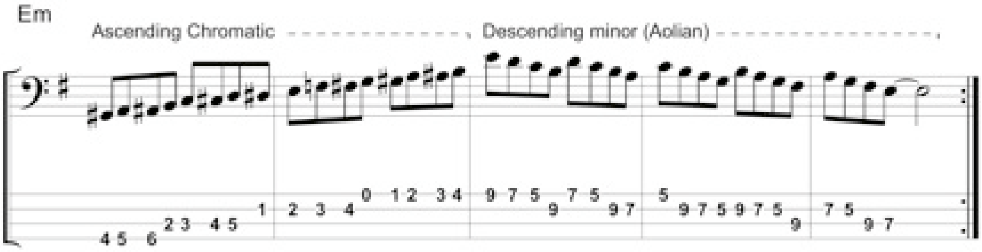
Example 4



Example 5



Example 6



ESSENTIAL TRACKS

'All Right Now', *Fire And Water*, Free
Who among us hasn't tried to play the bass riff in the guitar solo and thought 'This is harder than I thought…'?

'Every Kinda People', *Double Fun*, Robert Palmer
This is one of Palmer's biggest hits, written by Andy Fraser. Although Bob Babbit played bass on the recording, Fraser's influence is evident throughout.

'Mr. Big', Fire And Water, Free
This track is a masterclass in rock bass playing and soloing.

'Beautiful', *On Assignment*, Andy Fraser
A single released from his 2012 album, with a tasteful, reggae-infused bass-line.

GEAR

While Fraser was a big fan of the soul and Motown music of the time, when it came to bass players his main influence was Jack Bruce and this no doubt led to his choice of bass and amp – a Gibson EB-3 and Marshall 100w stack. No effects were used, but the volume of live gigs at that time meant that the bass always had a wonderful, warm overdriven sound, no doubt helped along by the powerful front humbucker on the EB-3. With subsequent projects and bands Fraser often uses either a blue or natural four-string Tobias.

STYLE

Pretty much everything you need to know about Fraser's style can be gleaned from listening to just one song, 'Mr Big', written by himself and Paul Rogers for Free. Leaving aside the solo for a moment, listen to the way he integrates the bass-line with the guitar riff and drums for the intro and verse. Most bass players at this time would have played a simple four-to-the-bar root note, but Fraser plays a root, five, octave lick before a tasty descending slide down from the minor 10th. This repeated one-bar phrase not only outlines the harmony perfectly, but also drives the melody forward while leaving space for the drum groove and guitar riff. The key of the song is E minor, but during the extended solo the harmony often shifts to the major. For the most part the solo consists of a series of minor or major phrases, connected by a (usually ascending) chromatic run.

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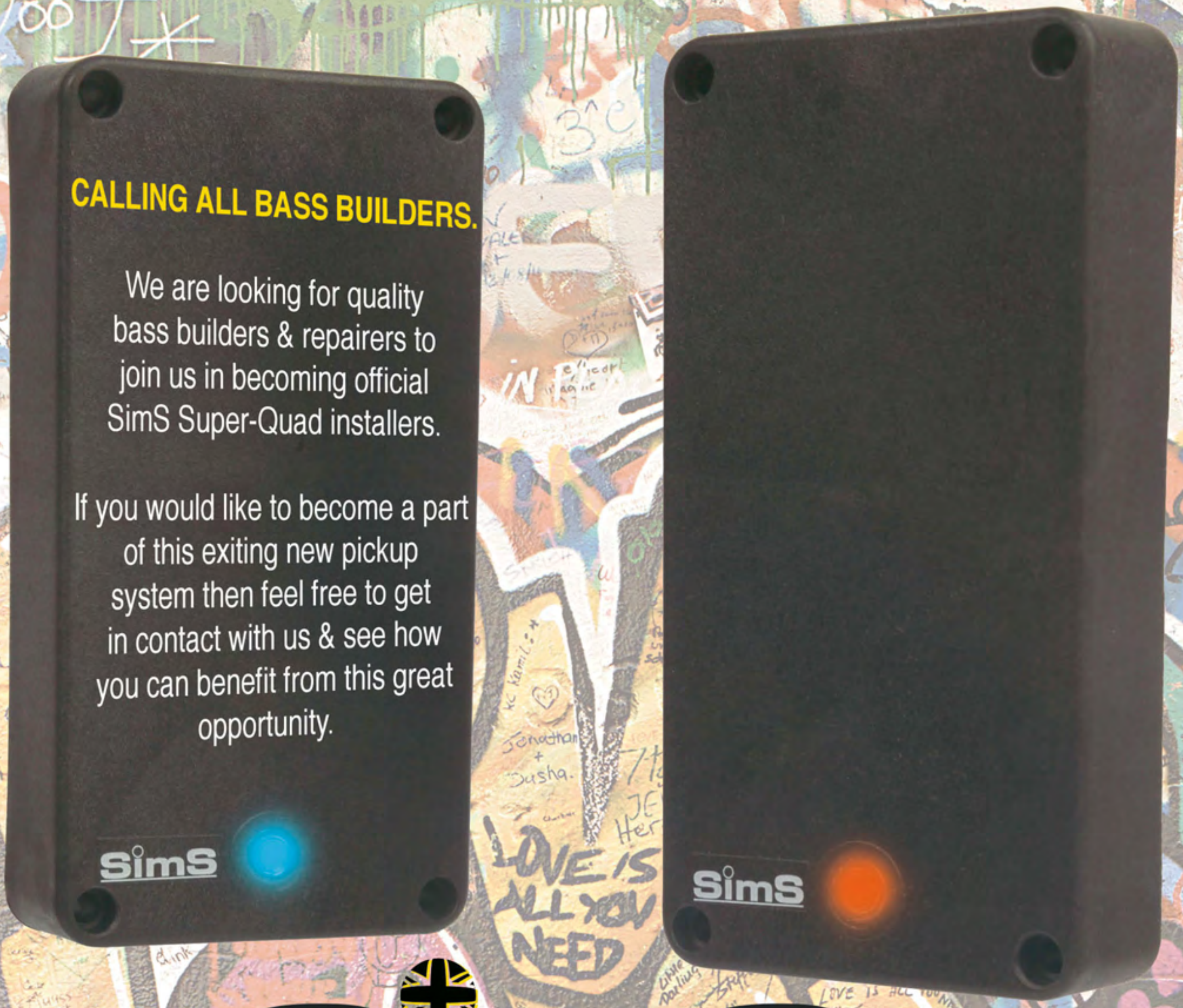

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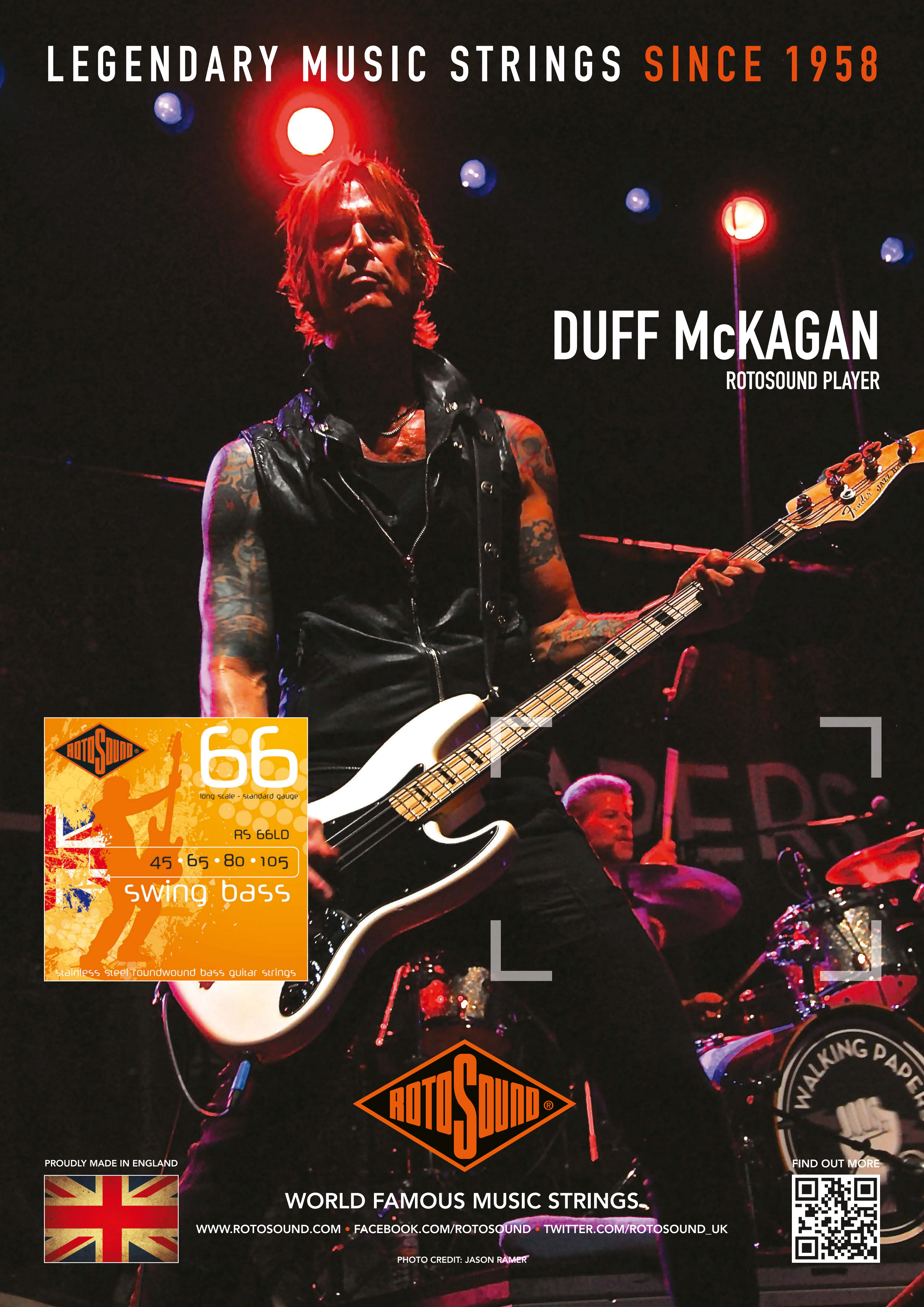
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